



# MODERN

Truths



Sixteen talks on the Noble Truths, with continuous reference to the Pali Texts and the **modern** world.  
Also a talk on how to decide what is and is not in accordance with The Buddha's Teachings.

If, bhikkhu, for disenchantment towards,  
dispassion for, and the cessation of birth,  
one teaches the Dhamma, then can one be  
called a 'bhikkhu who speaks the  
Dhamma'.

*Samyutta-Nikāya*

Please see p.205.

What's the laughter, what's the fun,  
When you're ever being burned?  
Shrouded in darkness,  
Do you not seek the light?

*Dhamma-Pada*

Please see p.167.

IMAGES:  
ultrasound image of  
embryo

—  
corpse that, being cre-  
mated face down, has  
arched up backwards.

**A Gift — Not for Sale**

Both formerly, bhikkhus, and now, what I teach is suffering and the cessation of suffering.

*Majjhima-Nikāya*

Please see p.148.

In whatever Dhamma-Vinaya, Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, the [first] ascetic is there also not found. The second ascetic is there also not found. The third ascetic is there also not found. The fourth ascetic is there also not found.

But in whatever Dhamma-Vinaya, Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is found, the [first] ascetic is there also found. The second ascetic is there also found. The third ascetic is there also found. The fourth ascetic is there also found.

In this very Dhamma-Vinaya, Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is found. Here only, Subhadda, is the [first] ascetic, here the second ascetic, here the third ascetic, here the fourth ascetic. Devoid are other teachings of ascetics.

Excellent, Venerable Sir! Excellent, Venerable Sir!

Just as if, Venerable Sir, He the upside down were to turn upright, or the concealed were to reveal, or to the lost were to show the way, or into the dark were to carry an oil lamp [thinking]: 'Let those with eyesight see sights', so the Bhagavā in many ways has made the Dhamma clear.

I, Venerable Sir, to the Bhagavā go for refuge, and to the Dhamma, and to the bhikkhu Sangha. May I, Venerable Sir, in the presence of the Bhagavā get the going forth, may I get the higher ordination.

*Dīgha-Nikāya*

Discussed pp.309-321.

If, bhikkhu, for disenchantment towards, dispassion for, and the cessation of, ageing & death, one teaches the Dhamma, then can one be called a 'bhikkhu who speaks the Dhamma'.

*Saṃyutta-Nikāya*

Please see p.205.

This is the only path: there is no other for the purification of insight.

Walk this path, and you will bewilder Māra.

*Dhamma-Pada*

Please see p.92.

**A Gift — Not for Sale**

These four people, Potaliya, exist in the world. Which four?

Here, Potaliya, a person (at the opportune time, saying what is factual and true) dispraises that which does not deserve praise, but does not in the same way praise that which does deserve it.

Again, Potaliya, a person (at the opportune time, saying what is factual and true) praises that which deserves praise, but does not in the same way dispraise that which does not deserve it.

Again, Potaliya, a person (at the opportune time, saying what is factual and true) neither dispraises that which does not deserve praise, nor praises that which does deserve it.

Again, Potaliya, a person (at the opportune time, saying what is factual and true) both dispraises that which does not deserve praise, and praises that which does deserve it....

Now, Potaliya, of these four, which person is in your view to be considered the most admirable and rare?

Of these four people, Master Gotama, he who (at the opportune time, saying what is factual and true) neither dispraises that which does not deserve praise, nor praises that which does deserve it, such a person is in my view to be considered the most admirable and rare of the four. Why? Because, Master Gotama, his equanimity is admirable.

Of these four people, Potaliya, [I declare that] he who (at the opportune time, saying what is factual and true) both dispraises that which does not deserve praise, and praises that which does deserve it, such a person is the most admirable and rare.

Why? Because, Potaliya, his discrimination of the proper occasion is admirable.

Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent, Master Gotama!

Just as if, Venerable Sir, He the upside down were to turn upright, or the concealed were to reveal, or to the lost were to show the way, or into the dark were to carry an oil-lamp [thinking]: 'Let those with eyesight see sights', so Master Gotama in many ways has made the Dhamma clear.

I go to Master Gotama for refuge, and the Dhamma and the Sangha. May Master Gotama henceforth accept me as a lay-disciple who has for life gone to Him for refuge.

*Aṅguttara-Nikāya*

Discussed p.327.

**A Gift — Not for Sale**



Truths

Sixteen talks on the Noble Truths, with continuous reference to the Pali Texts and the modern world. Also a talk on how to decide what is and is not in accordance with The Buddha's Teachings.

Ekacco Bhikkhu

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*Namo Tassa,*

Homage To Him,

*Bhagavato,*

The Blessed One,

*Arahato,*

The Worthy One,

*Sammā-*

The Perfectly

*Sambuddhassa.*

Self-Enlightened One

To my Father in the Holy Life:

*May He Be Well and Happy  
in Mind and Body.*

To my Mother in the worldly life:

*May She Be Well and Happy  
in Mind and Body.*







## Source References

Unless otherwise stated (in a footnote), all quotations from and references to the Pali Texts are from the below translations of those texts. The English of the quotations has in almost all cases been modified, mostly for idiomatic and pedagogical reasons, although care has been taken not to alter the meaning.

- A *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, (*Gradual Sayings*), PTS: 1982-9  
Ads *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha*, (*A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*), BPS: 1999  
D *Dīgha Nikāya*, (*Thus Have I Heard*),<sup>I</sup> WPL: 1987  
Dhp *Dhammapada*, (*The Buddha's Path of Wisdom*), BPS: 1996<sup>I</sup>  
DhpA *Dhammapada-Aṭṭhakathā*, (*Path of Truth Commentary*), PTS: 1990  
M *Majjhima Nikāya*, (*Middle-Length Discourses*), BPS: 1995  
Kh *Khuddaka Pāṭha*, (*The Minor Readings*), PTS: 1991<sup>II</sup>  
KhA *Khuddaka Pāṭha Aṭṭhakathā*, (*Param-Attha-Jotikā (The Illustrator of Ultimate Meaning)*), PTS: 1991<sup>II</sup>  
PED (*Pali-English Dictionary*), PTS: 1986  
S *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, (*Connected Discourses*), WPB: 2000  
Sn *Sutta Nipāta (Sutta Book)* .PTS: 1985 <sup>III</sup>  
Vin *Vinaya Piṭaka*, (*Rule Division*), PTS:1982-96  
Vis *Visuddhimagga*, (*Path of Purification*), BPS <sup>IV</sup>  
BPS Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka  
PTS Pali Text Society, Oxford/London, England  
WPB Wisdom Publications, Boston, Massachusetts  
WPL Wisdom Publications, London, England

Pali sutta titles, etc. are from the Burmese *Chaṭṭha Sangayāna CD (3)*: Vipassana Research Institute, Dhammagiri, India:1999.

Occasionally an English word or expression has been explained in a footnote, as the readers will presumably be almost only Singaporean/Malaysian Chinese Buddhists with English as a foreign or their own local English as a first or second language.

The dictionaries referred to have been:<sup>V</sup>

CCED—*Collins Cobuild English Dictionary*

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<sup>I</sup> *Dīgha (Long) Nikāya (Collection)*; *Dhamma (Truth) Pada (Path, Word)*

<sup>II</sup> Published in one book as *Minor Readings and Illustrator*.

<sup>III</sup> Published under the title *The Rhinoceros Horn*.

<sup>IV</sup> Section numbers from a paperback edition of *Path of Purification*, by Venerable Ñāṇamoli (originally published by BPS), reprinted in 1999 for free distribution by *The Penang Buddhist Association, Penang, Malaysia*, but with no acknowledgement, indication of publishers, place of publication or date of original edition.

<sup>V</sup> Preparing these books for re-publication, the author had no longer access to several of the dictionaries listed here, so for additional material and amendments, reference has been made to: ChD—*Chambers Dictionary* (11th Edition) © Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd. 2008; LDEL—*Longman Dictionary of the English Language* © Merriam-Webster Inc. 1984; 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition © Longman Group UK Ltd, 1991; SOED—*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* © Oxford University Press 2007.

Founding Editor-in-Chief John Sinclair: HarperCollins Publishers: 2001  
CIDE—*Cambridge International Dictionary of English*,  
Editor in Chief Paul Procter: Cambridge University Press: 1996  
CTCD—*Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*,  
Editor A.M.Macdonald OBE BA(Oxon): W&R Chambers Ltd.: 1972  
NODE—*The New Oxford Dictionary of English*  
Chief Editor Patrick Hanks, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England: 2001  
OALD—*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*,  
Chief Editor A.P.Cowie: Oxford University Press: 1989  
POD—*The Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, H.W.Fowler: Clarendon Press: 1924

## Author's Note

*Modern Truths* contains sixteen talks on the Noble Truths plus a talk on how to decide what is and is not a teaching of The Buddha.

The talks were prepared upon the request of devotees at a temple in Penang, Malaysia. All except the talk on the Path-factor Right View and that on the Path-factor Right Intention were also delivered.

Again upon request, all except the talk on the four Noble Truths ('A Modern Opportunity', p.1ff), and the one on Right Intention ('Beauty Is in the Eye of the Blind' p.263), were published in Penang, in two separate books.<sup>V</sup>

- 1) *Modern Birth, Ageing, and Death* (p.17ff) — 5 + 1 talks  
One talk on the Noble Truth of Suffering; four on the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering; and as an appendix, one on Right View (the first factor of the Noble Eightfold Path, the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering). As an appendix also a talk entitled 'Is this the Dhamma-Vinaya?'
- 2) *Modern Happiness Very Difficult to See* (p.117ff) — 7 + 1 talks  
Seven talks on the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, and as an appendix, one on the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering, the Noble Eightfold Path.

Upon the request of devotees at a temple in Singapore, all seventeen talks (2+6+8) and their appendices are herewith published together.

Since the talk on the Noble Eightfold Path, the talk on Right View, and the talk on Right Intention, were intended as the first three of a series discussing the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering, they have here been put separately under *The Path Leading to Modern Happiness Very Difficult to See* (p.225ff).

The talk on how to decide what is and is not a teaching of The Buddha has been put at the end, as it is not directly related to any of the four Noble Truths, but is directly related to one's study and understanding of The Buddha's Teachings as a whole.

Inconsistencies in translation, etc., between one talk and another have been left as they are.

*Ekacco Bhikkhu*

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<sup>V</sup> For detailed tables of contents, please see under the individual book.



A request has been made for talks on the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri Ariya-Saccāni*).<sup>1</sup> In other words, a request has been made for talks on the Dhamma in its totality, because the Dhamma is nothing more and nothing less than the Four Noble Truths. Let us therefore begin at the beginning; let us look briefly at The Buddha's description of His move from the ignorance and confusion of a Bodhisatta to the wisdom and enlightenment of an arahant and Buddha, and afterwards look briefly at the first time He explained the Four Noble Truths: His very first teaching.

To begin at the beginning: The Buddha's birth. *Vesākha* Day is the second full-moon day of the summer season, which is in Pali called *Gimhāna*. And this was the day when Queen Mahāmāyā gave birth to a son in the Lumbini Forest. That son was to become known as Prince Siddhattha, and he was the Bodhisatta who later in life would become Buddha. His actual rebirth, however (when His rebirth-linking consciousness descended into her womb), had taken place ten months earlier.

Twenty-nine years later, on the bank of the Anomā River east of Kapilavatthu, there was the Great Renunciation (*Mah-Ābhikkhamana*). This was when the Bodhisatta left his wife and newborn son to seek the Deathless. Six years later, when he was thirty-five years old, under the Bodhi Tree at Uruvelā on the bank of the Nerañjarā River, again on the *Vesākha* Day, the Bodhisatta attained Full Self-Enlightenment (*Sammā-Sam-Bodhi*). Then again on *Vesākha* Day, forty-five years later, when He was eighty years old, in the sal grove (*sāla-vana*) in Kusinārā, there was The Buddha's Great Parinibbāna (*Mahā-Parinibbāna*). This was when there was the final cessation of The Buddha's mentality-materiality continuity. After His death consciousness had arisen, persisted, and ceased, there was no more arising of consciousness. The Buddha had reached the Deathless. All that remained was His corpse. It was cremated, and the relics distributed.

That is a very brief summary of the birth, ageing, and death of The Buddha, Gotama Buddha.

Let us then listen to what The Buddha says about the birth of a Buddha. He says:<sup>2</sup>

One person's appearance, bhikkhus (*eka-puggalassa, bhikkhave, pātubhāvo*), is hard to obtain in the world (*dullabho lokasmim*). Of which one person?

Of the Tathāgata (*Tathāgatassa*), Arahant (*Arahato*), Fully Self-Enlightened One (*Sammā-Sam-Buddhassa*).

This one person's appearance, bhikkhus, is hard to obtain in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> This talk was given as an introduction to subsequent talks on each of the four Noble Truths. There was then one talk on the Noble Truth of Suffering, four on the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, and seven on the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. The talks on the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering were begun, but discontinued after three had been prepared and two delivered. See further 'Author's Note', p.ix.

<sup>2</sup> A.I.xiii.171 '*Eka Puggala Vaggo*' ('One Person Chapter')

It is very rare that a Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha arises in the world. Aeons, many aeons, pass between the arising of one Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha and the next. Let us then listen to what The Buddha says about the actual appearance, the actual arising of a Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha:<sup>3</sup>

There is one person (*eka-puggalo*), bhikkhus, whose arising in the world arises for the many's welfare, for the many's happiness, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, [and] happiness of devas and men.

Who is that one person?

It is the Tathāgata (*Tathāgato*), Arahant (*Araham*), Fully Self-Enlightened One (*Sammā-Sam-Buddho*).

This indeed, bhikkhus, is the one person (*eka-puggalo*) whose arising in the world arises for the many's welfare, for the many's happiness, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, [and] happiness of devas and men.

Let us then listen to how it is that The Buddha is the one person whose arising in the world arises for the many's welfare, benefit, and happiness.

The Buddha explains:<sup>4</sup>

Here, a Tathāgata arises in the world: Arahant, a Fully Self-Enlightened One; Possessed of Knowledge and Conduct; Accomplished; Knower of worlds; Unsurpassable Trainer of men; Teacher of devas and human beings; Enlightened; Blessed.

He speaks thus:

'Come, this is the way (*eth[a]āyaṃ maggo*), this the practice (*ayaṃ paṭipadā*), that I Myself have practised and realized with direct knowledge, and by which I make known the unsurpassable of the holy life (*anuttaraṃ brahma-cariy-ogadham*).

'Come (*etha*)! You too practise so (*tumhe-pi tathā paṭipajjatha*), according to which practice you too, having realized and attained with direct knowledge the unsurpassable of the holy life, will abide therein.'

Thus this teacher teaches the Dhamma (*Dhammaṃ deseti*), and others too practise for that purpose. Moreover, of such there are many hundreds, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands.

The unsurpassable (*anuttaraṃ*) is Nibbāna, and to abide therein is to abide in the Nibbāna attainment. And The Buddha explains that this is what He Himself had done. He had undertaken a certain practice and attained Nibbāna. And it was this practice, with this aim, that was His teaching. And it was this practice's result that was the happiness and benefit to be gained by many hundreds, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands, who followed His instructions and themselves practised accordingly.

Let us then look at the path that led the twenty-nine year old prince to reach this unsurpassable goal of the holy life.

The Buddha Himself describes His life as the prince Siddhattha. It was the aimless life of luxury customary to princes of ancient India. The Buddha explains:<sup>5</sup>

Before my enlightenment, bhikkhus, while I was still only an unenlightened Bodhisatta, I

<sup>3</sup> A.I.xiii.170 *ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> A.III.II.i.10 '*Saṅgāraṇa Sutta*' ('*Saṅgāraṇa Sutta*')

<sup>5</sup> M.I.iii.6 '*Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta*' ('*Noble Search Sutta*') (This sutta is also called '*Pāsa-Rāsi Sutta*' ('*Mass of Snares Sutta*'))

too, (being myself subject to birth) sought what was also subject to birth; (being myself subject to ageing, sickness, death, sorrow and defilement) sought what was also subject to ageing, sickness, death, sorrow, and defilement.

The Bodhisatta was here engaged in what The Buddha calls the ignoble search (*anariyā pariyesanā*). And in saying He was only an unenlightened Bodhisatta, The Buddha is referring to Himself as He was before He became a Buddha and arahant. Being yet unenlightened, a Bodhisatta is by His very nature an ignorant, common person (*puthujjana*). Hence, says the Buddha, the prince's life was aimed at

wife and children, men and women slaves, goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, gold and silver.

That is, family, servants, property and money: the world. The prince's life was aimed at the world just as everyone else's life is.

The prince's life was aimed at the world; his life was aimed at the aimless, because, as The Buddha explains, the world is nothing but ageing, sickness, death, sorrow and defilement, which serves no good purpose: the world serves no good purpose. When we aim at something that serves no good purpose and is aimless, our life serves no good purpose; our life is aimless.

Imagine, for example, that we are a famous doctor on our sixty-fifth birthday. We are sitting in our enormous mansion; our gleaming Jaguar is parked in the garage; our adorable grandchildren are playing in the swimming-pool; the cook and the servants are getting things ready for a big family dinner; our wife is at the beauty parlour (again) having her grey hair tinted and her wrinkled face made up; the dog and the cat are at our feet; and the family of goldfish are staring at us through the glass in the fish-bowl, also waiting for dinner. Our mother and father are not coming for dinner, and other relatives and friends are not coming for dinner either, because they have already fallen victims to ageing, sickness and death: they are in the grave. We can then look at the date on our gold Rolex wristwatch, and ask ourselves: 'Have I done something truly useful with my life?'<sup>6</sup> And what do we see?

If we view our life with rose-tinted glasses (with ignorance), we smile with satisfaction and pride at all the gleaming technology at the hospital, patients respectful and grateful as we strut through the wards (a fount of medical knowledge), the 'important' articles we have had published, the 'important' conferences and lectures abroad and at home, our array of credit cards and bulging bank-accounts, our enormous mansion, the priceless furniture and bric-à-brac, our tailor-made suits, the handmade shoes, the Jaguar and jeep, the seaside villa with swimming pool, the bungalow in the Cameron Highlands,<sup>7</sup> the golf with other 'important' people, the exclusive restaurants, and our happy and smiling friends and family, etc.

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<sup>6</sup> The author heard of this reflection (at sixty-five asking oneself such a question) when being told of how a young, newly graduated law-student in Malaysia had reflected thus, had subsequently decided to ordain as a bhikkhu, and encouraged others to reflect likewise and do likewise.

<sup>7</sup> CAMERON HIGHLANDS: highlands in Central Malaysia, much visited by local tourists for their beauty and for the cool climate; a sign of affluence is to have a bungalow there.



If we view our life with tintless glasses (with wisdom), we see forty years of patients pouring into the hospital, every day of the week, morning, noon and night, with all their ailments, and forty years of doctors and nurses working round the clock frantically trying to relieve the patients' suffering. We see the patients will never stop coming, because their ailment is rebirth, and rebirth cannot be cured with tablets or an operation. Thus we see forty years of patients running aimlessly into the hospital, helping us become aimlessly rich and aimlessly famous, and then they have run aimlessly out of the hospital again (unless they have been carried out in a coffin).

Every morning we read the aimless newspaper (including the hallowed business pages), and every evening we watch the aimless news (including the hallowed sports roundup), and all we see is the same aimless running on. It is everywhere and everyone. At the end of the day, our life is the same as the life of the goldfish: they swim round and round and round in circles in their little fishbowl, and we too run round and round and round in circles. And if we look into the future, we see the aimless running on go on and on and on into the grave, into the next grave, and the next grave, and the next grave and on and on and on. Looking into the past we see the aimless running on has no beginning, and looking into the future (so long as our life is aimed at the world) we see the aimless running on has no end either. The paths of glory lead but to the grave. This is the reality of *saṃsāra*.

The Buddha explains:<sup>8</sup>

Whenever, bhikkhus, you see anyone in distress, in misery, you can conclude: 'We too have experienced the same thing in this long course'. Why?

Because inconceivable, bhikkhus, is the beginning of this *saṃsāra*. A first point of the rushing on, and running about of beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving is not known. For many a long day, bhikkhus, have you experienced suffering, anguish, and disaster, and swelled the graveyards.

But life is not only misery, is it? The Buddha says also:<sup>9</sup>

Whenever, bhikkhus, you see anyone happy and fortunate, you can conclude: 'We too have experienced the same thing in this long course'....

Imagine becoming a famous doctor in the next twenty-thousand lives, the same thing over and over again, and twenty-thousand times, on our sixty-fifth birthday looking at the date on our gold Rolex wristwatch, and asking ourselves: 'Have I done something truly useful with my life?' And twenty-thousand times having to admit to ourselves (if we dare) that it has been merely the same rigmarole: aimless running from ageing, sickness, death and defilement to further ageing, sickness, death and defilement. Please close your eyes, and then look back at your life with honesty, from early childhood to now, and then look into the future and imagine doing the same, experiencing the same joys and sorrows for another twenty-thousand lives. What does it look like? Please answer my question.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> S.II.IV.ii.1 'Duggata Sutta' ('Distressed Sutta')

<sup>9</sup> S.II.IV.ii.2 'Sukhita Sutta' ('Happy Sutta')

<sup>10</sup> The answers were: 'Meaningless!', 'It sounds boring, but we have no choice!' and 'Dukkha!'

It was this kind of reflection on the realities of life, that made Prince Siddhattha decide to stop the ignoble, aimless search, and undertake what the Buddha calls the noble search (*ariyā pariyesanā*): to seek what He calls:

the unageing, unailing, deathless, sorrowless, and undefiled supreme security from bondage.

To seek Nibbāna.

It was this kind of reflection on the realities of life, that made Prince Siddhattha think of no longer going into the aimless world, but out of it. The Buddha says:<sup>11</sup>

...before my enlightenment, while I was still only an unenlightened Bodhisatta, I thought: 'Household life is crowded and dusty; life gone forth is wide open. It is not easy, while living in a home, to lead the holy life utterly perfect and pure as a polished shell. Suppose I shave off my hair and beard, put on the yellow robe, and go forth from the home life into homelessness.'

And eventually the Bodhisatta left home, although his parents, as they are even today, were against it. The Buddha says:<sup>12</sup>

Later, while still young, a black-haired young man endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life, though my mother and father wished otherwise, and wept with tearful faces, I shaved off my hair and beard, put on the yellow robe, and went forth from the home life into homelessness.

He was twenty-nine years old.

The Bodhisatta went forth into homelessness, and practised meditation under two teachers, and in both cases, He mastered their teaching, and in both cases, He realized it too was aimless. The meditation they taught was aimed at rebirth in a higher world, but He wanted enlightenment, which means no more rebirth in any kind of world.

So He undertook extreme self-mortification (such as not breathing, extreme fasting, and relentless exposure to the cold and heat), and brought Himself close to death. Five other ascetics, sure that He would attain the highest, became His companions. But after six years, the Bodhisatta realized self-mortification too was aimless. Then, remembering how He as a child had attained the first jhāna, He decided that had to be the way to enlightenment, and gave up the self-mortification. Again He took normal food, and regained His strength, and his five companions left in disgust, thinking He had given up the holy life: the Bodhisatta was alone.

Then, on the full-moon day of May (*Vesākha Day*), He sat down under a Bodhi Tree, and determined not to get up until He was enlightened. Using mindfulness-of-breathing (*ānāpānasati*) as His meditation subject, the Bodhisatta attained the first, second, third and fourth jhānas. And in the first watch of the night<sup>13</sup> (using the power and light of His fourth jhāna<sup>14</sup>) The Bodhisatta recol-

<sup>11</sup> M.I.iv.6 'Mahā Saccaka Sutta' ('Great Saccaka Sutta')

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> WATCH as in 𑀅𑀓𑀚𑀓𑀓𑀓𑀓𑀓𑀓 navies, the night was in Pali divided into three watches of four hours' duration: the first-, middle-, and last watch.

<sup>14</sup> POWER AND LIGHT OF THE FOURTH JHĀNA: once one has attained a certain degree of concentration, there is light in the mind. With the fourth jhāna, this light is very powerful. (Please see, for

lected countless past lives: this is the knowledge of recollecting past lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*), what The Buddha calls the first true knowledge (*paṭhamā vijjā*). In the second watch of the night, He developed the divine eye (*dibba cakkhu*), and saw how beings die and are reborn in different realms of existence, under good and bad circumstances, according to their good and bad kamma: this is the knowledge of the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu ñāṇā*), what The Buddha calls the second true knowledge (*dutīya vijjā*).

And in the third watch of the night, says The Buddha:

When My concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to knowledge of the destruction of the taints (*āsavaṇaṃ khayañāyā*).

The taints (*āsavā*) are three:

- 1) the sensuality taint (*kāmāsava*)
- 2) the coming-into-existence taint (*bhavāsava*)
- 3) the ignorance taint (*avijjāsava*)

They keep us going in *samsāra*. Destruction of the taints is enlightenment and arahantship. The Buddha explains His destruction of the taints, first by way of His understanding the four Noble Truths, in terms of suffering (*dukkha*):

- [1] I understood as it really is: ‘This is suffering (*idaṃ dukkhaṃ*)’
- [2] I understood as it really is: ‘This is the origin of suffering (*ayaṃ dukkhasamudayo*)’
- [3] I understood as it really is: ‘This is the cessation of suffering (*ayaṃ dukkhanirodho*)’
- [4] I understood as it really is: ‘This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering (*ayaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā*)’

Then The Buddha explains His understanding of the four Noble Truths in terms of the taints (*āsavā*):

- [1] I understood as it really is: ‘These are the taints (*ime āsavā*)’
- [2] I understood as it really is: ‘This is the origin of the taints (*ayaṃ āsavaṇasamudayo*)’
- [3] I understood as it really is: ‘This is the cessation of the taints (*ayaṃ āsavanirodho*)’
- [4] I understood as it really is: ‘This is the path leading to the cessation of the taints (*ayaṃ āsavanirodhagāminī paṭipadā*)’.

We see thus that suffering (*dukkha*) is related to the taints (*āsavā*). When the taints are destroyed, there is enlightenment and arahantship, and that is the end of suffering and the end of aimless running on in *samsāra*, for it is the complete end of rebirth. The Buddha explains:

When I knew and saw thus [the Four Noble Truths, etc.], my mind was liberated

- [1] from the taint of sensuality,
- [2] from the taint of coming-into-existence, and
- [3] from the taint of ignorance.

When it was liberated, there came the knowledge: ‘It is liberated.’

I understood: ‘Birth is destroyed (*khīṇā jati*), the holy life has been lived (*vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ*), done is what had to be done (*kataṃ karaṇiyaṃ*), there is no more coming to any state of being (*nāparamitthattāyā*).’

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example, immediately following quotation: ‘When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright...’) If one’s concentration is only weak, of course, this light will not appear.

This is the knowledge of destruction of the taints (*āsavānaṃ khaya nāṇa*), what The Buddha calls the third true knowledge (*tatiyā vijjā*).

With this third true knowledge, the thirty-five year-old Bodhisatta had stopped being confused (*sammūlho*), for he had attained to true knowledge (*vijjā*), and was now an arahant and Buddha; an arahant and Buddha is unconfused (*asammūlho*). The Buddha explains:

Him I call unconfused who has abandoned the taints (*āsavā*), which defile, bring renewal of coming-into-existence, give trouble, ripen in suffering, and lead to future rebirth, ageing, and death; for it is with the abandoning of the taints that one is unconfused.

The Tathāgata... has abandoned the taints, which defile, bring renewal of coming-into-existence, give trouble, ripen in suffering, and lead to future rebirth, ageing, and death.

With the first true knowledge, the Bodhisatta saw how He had through countless aeons run on aimlessly in *samsāra*; with the second true knowledge, He saw how our good and bad kamma decides the manner in which we run on aimlessly in *samsāra*; and with the third true knowledge He saw how He would now no longer be running on aimlessly in *samsāra*. To stop running on aimlessly in *samsāra* is, as the Buddha said, the aim of the Noble Search, the aim of the holy life; it is what has to be done. Realizing He had done what has to be done, The Buddha was inspired to express it in verse:<sup>15</sup>

*Anekajātisamsāraṃ, sandhāvissaṃ anibbisam;*  
*Gahakārakaṃ gavesanto, dukkhā jāti punappunam.*

Through many births going on, running along not finding  
The house-builder sought: suffering is birth again and again.

The house is the coming into existence of a being; the house-builder is craving (*taṇhā*). We can also say the house-builder is the taints. Because of craving, because of the taints, again and again there is birth, ageing and death. Then:

*Gahakāraka diṭṭhosi, puna gehaṃ na kāhasi!*  
House-builder, you are seen! Again a house you will not build!  
*Sabbā te phāsukā bhaggā, gahakūṭaṃ visaṅkhatam;*  
All the ribs [of the house] are broken. The house-ridge destroyed.  
*Visaṅkhāragataṃ cittaṃ, taṇhānaṃ khayamajjhagā.*  
To the Unformed gone the mind, craving's end has been found.

Here, the house-builder was seen, meaning the Bodhisatta understood that the house-builder had all along been craving (*taṇhā*). The ribs of the house were the defilements (*kilesa*), the house-ridge ignorance (*avijjā*). All the ribs of the house meet in the ridge, the ridge pole. When ignorance is destroyed, the whole edifice collapses. And ignorance is destroyed when the four Noble Truths have been fully realized.

This, explains the Buddha, is how all arahants and Buddhas become arahants and Buddhas:<sup>16</sup>

Bhikkhus, whatever Arahants, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, in the past fully realized things as they really are, all fully realized the Four Noble Truths as they really are (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*

<sup>15</sup> Dhp.xi.8-9 'Jarā Vagga' ('Ageing Chapter')

<sup>16</sup> S.V.XII.iii.4 'Arahanta Sutta' ('Arahants Sutta')

*yathābhūtaṃ abhisambujjhīṃsu).*

Whatever Arahants, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, will in the future fully realize things as they really are, will all fully realize the Four Noble Truths as they really are (*cattāri ariyasaccāni yathābhūtaṃ abhisambujjhissanti).*

Whatever Arahants, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, have in the present fully realized things as they really are, have all fully realized the Four Noble Truths as they really are (*cattāri ariyasaccāni yathābhūtaṃ abhisambujjhanti).*

The Buddha explains that to have fully realized the Four Noble Truths is in fact the definition of an arahant and Buddha:<sup>17</sup>

What four?

- [1] The Noble Truth of Suffering (*dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ*);
- [2] the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*dukkhasamudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ*);
- [3] the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ*); and
- [4] the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccaṃ*).

These then, bhikkhus, are the Four Noble Truths.

It is because He has become fully enlightened to these Four Noble Truths as they really are (*catunnaṃ ariyasaccānaṃ yathābhūtaṃ abhisambuddhattā*) that the Tathāgata is called the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One (*arahaṃ sammāsambuddho*).

After His enlightenment, the Buddha spent seven weeks in the vicinity of the Bodhi Tree, meditating further, reviewing His knowledge, and simply enjoying the bliss of Nibbāna. Then He set forth to join His former companions, the five ascetics, who were now in a park outside the great city of Benares.<sup>18</sup> And on the full-moon day of *Āsālha* (July), He gave His first Dhamma teaching, the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* ('Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta'). Properly to understand what The Buddha means by enlightenment, let us listen to that all-important sutta, and look briefly at the contents:<sup>19</sup>

Thus did I hear. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Benares in the Deer Park at Isipatana [the Resort of Seers]. There He addressed the bhikkhus of the group of five.

These two extremes, bhikkhus, ought not to be followed by one gone forth from the house-life. What two?

- [1] There is the practice of indulgence in sensuality (*kāmesu kāma-sukhallik-ānuyogo*), which is inferior (*hīno*), vulgar (*gammo*), of the common man (*pothujjaniko*), ignoble (*anariya*), and without purpose (*an-attha-saṃhito*).

This extreme is the path of the six senses, the stupid sixfold path, so to speak: the path of pleasant sights, sounds, odours, flavours, touches and sensations, perceptions, etc.

And there is the practice of self-mortification (*atta-kilamath-ānuyogo*), which is suffering (*dukkho*), ignoble (*anariya*), and without purpose (*an-attha-saṃhito*).

This extreme is the super-stupid sixfold path, so to speak: the path of unpleasant sights, sounds, odours, flavours, touches and sensations, perceptions, etc.

<sup>17</sup> S.V.XII.iii.3 'Sammāsambuddha Sutta' ('Perfectly Enlightened Buddha Sutta')

<sup>18</sup> The 𑀅𑀲𑀓𑀲𑀓𑀲 name for this ancient city is Varanasi.

<sup>19</sup> S.V.XII.ii.1 'Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana Sutta' ('Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta')

These two stupid paths make for blindness, ignorance, trouble, suffering and continued rebirth (even in hell). As The Buddha says, they are without purpose (*an-atha-saṃhito*). Then there is the path that is with good purpose:

The middle way (*majjhimā paṭipadā*) by the Tathāgata discovered avoids both these extremes, is vision-making (*cakkhu-karaṇī*), is knowledge-making (*ñāṇa-karaṇī*), and to peace (*upasamāya*), to direct knowledge (*abhiññāya*), to enlightenment (*sambodhāya*), to Nibbāna (*Nibbānāya*) it leads (*saṃvattati*).

And what is the middle way? It is simply the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Attharigika Magga*), that is to say, Right View (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*), Right Intention (*Sammā Saṅkappa*), Right Speech (*Sammā Vācā*), Right Action (*Sammā Kammanta*), Right Livelihood (*Sammā Ājīva*), Right Effort (*Sammā Vāyāma*), Right Mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*), Right Concentration (*Sammā Samādhi*).

That is the middle way by the Tathāgata discovered, which is vision making, knowledge making, and to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna it leads.

Here, The Buddha first explained the two ways that do not aim at enlightenment. One is the aimless devotion to sensuality, which is to delight in sensual objects: beautiful sights, beautiful sounds, beautiful odours, beautiful flavours, beautiful touches and beautiful mental objects such as beautiful sensations and beautiful perceptions. That is what the Bodhisatta used to devote Himself to. And if we open the newspaper, watch TV, listen to the radio, or just go downtown and look around, we see everywhere the same aimless devotion to sensuality, the same aimless pursuit of sensual pleasures, which is an aimless running on from rebirth to rebirth, from suffering to more suffering.

The second way that does not lead to enlightenment is self-mortification, which is physical self-torment. Many ascetics in Ancient India devoted themselves to such practices, it exists as a practice in all religions, and the Bodhisatta devoted Himself to it for six years. We see thus that when The Buddha said these two extremes are aimless, He was speaking from personal experience in this life: the Bodhisatta engaged first in the one aimless devotion, and then in the other. The Buddha was also able to see that these two extremes were aimless, because He had looked back countless aeons and seen that He and other beings had devoted themselves to these practices to no avail.

Having explained the two ways without an aim, The Buddha then explained the one and only path with an aim: the middle way, the Noble Eightfold Path. It can be summarized as:

- |                                    |   |   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1) <i>sīla</i> (morality):         | { | Right Speech ( <i>Sammā Vācā</i> )<br>Right Action ( <i>Sammā Kammanta</i> )<br>Right Livelihood ( <i>Sammā Ājīva</i> )         |
| 2) <i>samādhi</i> (concentration): | { | Right Effort ( <i>Sammā Vāyāma</i> )<br>Right Mindfulness ( <i>Sammā Sati</i> )<br>Right Concentration ( <i>Sammā Samādhi</i> ) |
| 3) <i>paññā</i> (wisdom):          | { | Right View ( <i>Sammā Diṭṭhi</i> )<br>Right Intention ( <i>Sammā Saṅkappa</i> )   |

Thus, The Buddha started His first discourse by explaining the paths that are aimless, and the path that is aimed at enlightenment.

When the Bodhisatta had stopped practising self-mortification, the five ascetics thought He had given up the holy life and reverted to the aimless indulgence of pleasure, and they left Him in disgust. Beginning His discourse by explaining that neither the indulgence of pleasure nor self-mortification constitute the

holy life, The Buddha put their minds at rest, after which He proceeded to explain the constituents of enlightenment: the Four Noble Truths (*Cattāri Ariya Sac-cāni*). He said first:

This, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of Suffering (*dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ*):

- birth is suffering (*jātipi dukkhā*), ageing is suffering (*jarāpi dukkhā*), sickness is suffering (*byādhipi dukkho*), death is suffering (*maraṇampi dukkhaṃ*);
- association with what one dislikes is suffering (*appiyehi sampayogo dukkho*),
- dissociation from what one likes is suffering (*piyehi vippayogo dukkho*),
- not to get what one wants, it too is suffering (*yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ*);
- in short, the five aggregates of clinging are suffering (*saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā*).

This is the First Noble Truth: the Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukkhaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ*).

What does *dukkhaṃ* mean? The Texts<sup>20</sup> explain that *du* means ‘bad’ (as in *dupputta*: a ‘bad child’), and *kkhaṃ* refers to emptiness, to being devoid of the permanence, beauty, pleasure and self that is seen by foolish people.

*Dukkha* is in English usually translated as suffering, which is as good a translation as any, but as we can see *dukkha* refers to something much wider and subtler than what we usually think of as suffering. The suffering that *dukkha* refers to covers every kind of discomfort, dis-ease and displeasure that we experience: breaking a leg is *dukkha*, but breaking a cup is also *dukkha*; breaking one’s heart is *dukkha* and breaking the law is *dukkha*; breaking one’s word is *dukkha* and breaking into tears or even breaking into a laugh is *dukkha*. And, as The Buddha says, *dukkha* is nothing less than ‘the five aggregates of clinging’ (*pañcupādāna-kkhandhā*).

The five aggregates of clinging are: matter (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), mental formations (*saṅkhārā*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*).

Without the five aggregates of clinging, the *dukkha* of breaking a leg, a cup, one’s heart, the law, one’s word, and breaking into tears and laughter would not exist. Thus, the five aggregates of clinging are the same as *dukkha*. That is the First Noble Truth.

Then The Buddha explained the Second Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*Dukkha-Samudayaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ*):

This, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*dukkhasamudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ*). It is the craving (*taṇhā*) that produces renewal of coming-into-existence accompanied by enjoyment and lust, and enjoying this and that; in other words, craving for sensual pleasures (*kāma taṇhā*), craving to come into existence (*bhava taṇhā*), and craving to go out of existence (*vibhava taṇhā*).

Renewal of existence is rebirth, and it is caused by craving, which is endless delight and greed. We want always to be happy and not suffer, and that makes us suffer: suffering arises out of the desire not to suffer. The Texts explain how our craving manifests in three ways:<sup>21</sup>

- 1) craving for sensual pleasures, which is craving for beautiful sights, sounds, odours, flavours, touches, and craving for beautiful mental objects such as beautiful sensations and perceptions.

<sup>20</sup> Vis.xvi PoP.13ff (‘Description of the Truths’)

<sup>21</sup> Vis.xvii (‘Craving’) PoP.233ff

- 2) craving to come into existence, which is to assume that those things will last forever, including oneself. It is a manifestation of the eternalist view, which is to think that one has an indestructible something that lives on forever and ever.
- 3) craving to go out of existence, which is to assume that the sensual pleasures will stop. It is a manifestation of the materialist view, which is to think that material death is the end of it all, and that only matter matters.

In all cases it is a delight in and craving for life, and that keeps us running on aimlessly in *samsāra*.

Then The Buddha explains the Third Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccam*):

This, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*dukkhanirodham ariyasaccam*). It is the remainderless fading and ceasing (*asesavirāganirodho*), giving up (*cāgo*), relinquishing (*paṭinissaggo*), letting go and rejecting (*mutti anālayo*), of that same craving (*yo tassāyeva taṇhāya*).

This is Nibbāna. Craving is why there is suffering, and if we put an end to craving, we put an end to suffering. There is no other way. Look into the world and see how we and everyone else is running aimlessly on trying to put an end to suffering by making the world beautiful. All the time we try to make sure that there are only beautiful sights, beautiful sounds, beautiful odours, beautiful flavours, beautiful touches, and beautiful sensations, perceptions, etc. We even go to war to do so. Do we succeed? Do the patients stop running into the hospital? Can the doctors and nurses ever see an end to their work? Please answer my questions.

Why does it not work? Because we are looking at the result instead of the cause. A Buddha looks at the cause, and He says that if we put an end to craving for sensual pleasures, put an end to craving to come into existence and put an end to craving to go out of existence, we will have put an end to suffering.

Then The Buddha explains the Fourth Noble Truth, which is how to go about putting an end to craving, how to go about putting an end to suffering, that is, the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodha-Gāminī-Paṭipadā Ariya-Saccam*):

This, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Practice Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*Idam kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccam*). It is simply the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariyo atthaṅgiko maggo*), that is to say, Right View (*Sammā Dīṭṭhi*), Right Intention (*Sammā Saṅkappa*), Right Speech (*Sammā Vācā*), Right Action (*Sammā Kammanta*), Right Livelihood (*Sammā Ājīva*), Right Effort (*Sammā Vāyāma*), Right Mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*), Right Concentration (*Sammā Samādhi*).

This is the only way to the end of suffering, and this is where a Buddha shows that He is a Buddha. There are many wise people who understand that life is suffering (although they do usually not understand the extent of that suffering). There are also wise people who understand that the origin of suffering is craving (although they do usually not understand the extent of that craving). And there are also some wise people who understand that the end of craving is the end of suffering. But there is no one apart from a Buddha who knows how to go about it. Only the Noble Eightfold Path can put an end to suffering, and only a Buddha discovers the Noble Eightfold Path.



Having now explained the Four Noble Truths, The Buddha explained to the five ascetics that His enlightenment constituted knowledge, wisdom, insight and light with regard to twelve things unheard before:

- 1) The Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukkham Ariya-Saccaṃ*)
- 2) The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*Dukkha-Samudayaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ*)
- 3) The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodhaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ*)
- 4) The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodha-Gāminī-Ṭṭipadā Ariya-Saccaṃ*)
- 5) That the Noble Truth of Suffering should be understood,
- 6) that He had understood it.
- 7) That the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering should be eradicated (craving should be eradicated),
- 8) that He had eradicated it.
- 9) That the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering should be realized (Nibbāna should be realized),
- 10) that He had realized it.
- 11) That the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering should be developed,
- 12) that He had developed it.

The Buddha explained that so long as He did not know and see these twelve things, so long did He not claim to be enlightened. But knowing and seeing them, He knew He was enlightened. And, says The Buddha:

Knowing and seeing arose in me thus:

‘My liberation is unassailable. This is the last birth (*ayamantimā jāti*).

‘Now there is no renewal of coming-into-existence (*natth-idāni puna-bbhavo*).’

That was it. The Buddha knew, as do all Buddhas, that at His death, His Parinibbāna (which took place forty-five years later), He would never ever again appear anywhere in any whatsoever realm of any whatsoever kind of coming-into-existence: this was His last birth in every conceivable sense of the word: such is arahantship and Buddhahood.

The five ascetics rejoiced at The Buddha’s words, and one (the Venerable Kondañña) attained stream-entry (*sot-āpatti*). But they were not the only ones who had been listening. Thousands and thousands and thousands of devas and Brahmās had also been listening, and many had also attained stream-entry. And with their attainment of stream-entry, the Wheel of Dhamma (*Dhamma Cakka*) had been set in motion (*pavattitam*). This was the beginning of the *Buddhasāsana*.

What does it mean that the Wheel of Dhamma had been set in motion? It means that there was once again the opportunity to stop running aimlessly along in *samsāra*, from birth to birth, from death to death, from suffering to suffering, but to run for Nibbāna, the end of all that. There was once again the opportunity to do as The Buddha Himself had done. And not only for human beings, also for devas and Brahmās. Understanding this, the lowest devas cried out:

At Benares, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the incomparable Wheel of Dhamma has been set in motion by the Blessed One, not to be stopped by any ascetic, Brahmin, deva, Māra, Brahmā, or anyone in the world!!!

And the devas in the realm above heard the cry, and gave the same cry, and the cry travelled that way up through all the spheres right up to the Brahma world, the ten thousandfold world system shook and immeasurable, glorious light appeared in the world.

From that day onwards there was again the opportunity to say: ‘No, thank you’ to suffering and rebirth, and ‘Yes, please’ to the end of suffering and rebirth. ‘Yes, please’, means to realize the Four Noble Truths as they really are. That is why The Buddha says:<sup>22</sup>

Those, bhikkhus, whom you have compassion for, and who think you should be listened to (whether friends or colleagues, relatives or kinsmen) them should you urge, make begin and establish in realizing the Four Noble Truths as they really are.

Out of compassion, for forty-five years, The Buddha provided people with the opportunity to realize the Four Noble Truths as they really are, in putting an end to the aimless running on in *saṃsāra*, in doing something truly useful with their lives: that opportunity still exists.

‘Come, this is the way (*eth[a]-āyaṃ maggo*), this the practice (*ayaṃ paṭipadā*), that I Myself have practised and realized with direct knowledge, and by which I make known the unsurpassable of the holy life (*anuttaraṃ brahma-cariy-ogadham*).

‘Come(*etha*)! You too practise so (*tumhe-pi tathā paṭipajjatha*), according to which practice you too, having realized and attained with direct knowledge the unsurpassable of the holy life, will abide therein.’

In The Buddha’s time, this was a modern opportunity that existed for all those who approached Him and His disciples. And as with everything else He taught, that opportunity has remained modern ever since: it is a two-thousand six hundred year-old modern opportunity. But, as we mentioned earlier, it is a rare opportunity. Very rare.

Whenever The Buddha had returned from *piṇḍapāta* with the bhikkhu Sangha, He reminded them of this rare opportunity. He reminded them that this rare opportunity depended on other rare things. The Buddha would say to the bhikkhu Sangha:<sup>23</sup>

*Bhikkhave, appamādena sampādettha.*

Bhikkhus, strive diligently.

1) *Dullabho buddhuppādo lokasmiṃ.*

Difficult to obtain is the arising of a Buddha in the world (*Buddhuppādo lokasmiṃ*).

2) *Dullabho manussattaṭṭhāpātibho.*

Difficult to obtain is acquisition of the human state (*manussatta*).

3) *Dullabhā saddhāsampatti.*

Difficult to obtain is the attainment of faith (*saddhā*).

4) *Dullabho pabbajjā.*

Difficult to obtain is the going forth (*pabbajjā*).

5) *Dullabham saddhammassavana’nti.*

Difficult to obtain is hearing the True Dhamma (*Saddhamma*).

<sup>22</sup> S.V.XII.iii.6 ‘*Mitta Sutta*’ (‘Friend Sutta’)

<sup>23</sup> The commentary to Sn.i.4 ‘*Kasibhāradvāja Sutta*’ (‘Kasibhāradvāja Sutta’)

These five things are difficult to obtain, very difficult: they are very rare. Even so, you live at a time when they all are within your grasp. The *Buddhasāsana* still exists. You have obtained the human state. You have faith. You can go forth into the holy life. You know women and men who lived like you, a life of no good purpose, and they went forth. They were like you; you can if you dare be like they are now. And even though the *Buddhasāsana* is in a parlous state and getting worse every day, it is still possible to hear the True Dhamma. The Texts still exist. Teachers who understand and teach according to those texts still exist. That is how you may understand that these five things are still *uncommon* phenomena. Their existence means you can make use of a rare opportunity, a rare *uncommon* opportunity.

Do you want to make use of that *uncommon* opportunity? Do you want to do something truly useful with your lives?

Thank you.

[On two occasions subsequent to this talk, the author was asked how breaking into laughter could be *dukkha*. In revised form, the answer(s) went as follows:]

So long as our life is only a running around after sensual pleasures, it can be very difficult to understand how laughter can be *dukkha*, because our experience of *dukkha* is only gross.

Take, for example, a little boy who enjoys going to a particular fast-food restaurant to eat a hamburger with cheese, french fries and a large Coke with ice. He thinks it is great, and looks much forward to it. Then take a man who enjoys going to a particular, exclusive restaurant to eat Peking duck and drink Chinese tea. If you ask him to go to the fast-food restaurant, he will refuse: ‘What! That stuff isn’t fit for dogs to eat!’ The boy’s eating pleasures are gross, while the man’s are more refined, subtle.

Subtle becomes also our experience of reality when we have meditated. During meditation, the mind calms down because we attend to only our meditation subject, for example, the in&out breath, which is very subtle and becomes more so. Then is there not the usual, continuous impact of sights striking the eye, sounds striking the ear, smells striking the nose, tastes striking the tongue, touches striking the body, and all sorts of thoughts, etc. striking the mind: only the concept of the breath striking the mind. When our concentration has increased, there may be nothing else, with all other impacts gone.

Furthermore, in a monastery where there is committed practice of the three-fold training, there will be no roars of laughter (The Buddha disallows bhikkhus to laugh and giggle like lay-people: He allows bhikkhus only to smile),<sup>24</sup> and no

<sup>24</sup> The bhikkhu’s *Pātimokkha* says: ‘I shall not go laughing loudly in inhabited areas... I shall not sit laughing loudly in inhabited areas: this is a training to be done.’ Training Rules (*sekhiyā dhammā*) i.11&12. The Buddha’s analysis (*vibhaṅga*) says: ‘There is no offence if it is unintentional, if he is not thinking, if he does not know, if he is ill, if he only smiles when the matter is one for laughter, if there are accidents, if he is mad, if he is the first wrong-doer.’ Even when a bhikkhu is in the monastery, it is of course quite unsuitable for him to laugh and giggle, etc., most especially if he is discussing Dhamma. Hence, The Buddha explains: ‘This is reckoned as childishness in the Noble discipline, namely, immoderate laughter that displays the teeth... Enough for you, if you are pleased rightly, to smile just to show your pleasure.’ (A.III.III.i.5 ‘*Runṇa Sutta*’ (‘Weeping Sutta’))

cracking of jokes and other prattle (wrong speech, rooted in the unwholesome roots of lust (*lobha*) and delusion (*moha*)). When there is meditation, there is also much silence, very much so during meditation.

When we come out of such a subtle state of concentration, our sensitivities are heightened, and we can suddenly see things that were hidden before: we can also see *dukkha*, where we did not see it before. Very often, when we return home from a retreat, it is a shock suddenly to be assailed from all sides again by gross sights, sounds, odours, flavours, touches, etc. We may, for example, turn on the TV and suddenly realize how raucous it all is, with much violence of image and sound. For the very rare meditator, this realization leads to increased and more committed practice of the Dhamma. For almost everyone, however, the realization is only brief, and soon again we run mindlessly around after sights, sounds, odours, flavours, etc.

Thus, without the experience of meditation, we may think laughter is a happy release: we enjoy a good joke, a funny film, comedy, etc. A certain kind of person will even seek occasions for laughter, and always try to see the funny side of things, bursting into loud laughter at any occasion. With meditation, however, we may have experienced the happiness of a calm mind, calm speech and calm movements of the body, only useful conversation and much silence. Then does the happiness of laughter and jokes suddenly appear as *dukkha*. Why? First of all because it serves no good purpose, secondly because such laughter arises always owing to conflict: the conflict between the expected and the unexpected. For example, there is nothing funny about a man driving along in a car. But when he steps out of the car into a puddle and disappears, we laugh. Why? Because it is unexpected. The punch-line of a joke is always an abrupt departure from the expected.

This clash between the expected and unexpected is also why we cry, and very often, if the clash is too big, we may go into hysterics and both laugh and cry. What has happened in all cases is that we allow ourselves to get caught in the situation. Just try watching comedy in a foreign language: very often it suddenly appears as stupid as it is. That is why meditators may find it increasingly difficult to join in people's laughter and jokes. The mind does not get caught anymore, because they can see the laughter: the *dukkha* of laughter.

It is for the same reason that an intelligent person is unable to get excited over a football match. He remains in the stands, does not get involved in the game, and is therefore able to see the game for what it is: twenty-two fools running around after a ball full of air, trying to kick it into a wooden frame called a goal. To an intelligent person, a football match is organized insanity, therefore fraught with immense *dukkha*.

Meditation leads to heightened sensitivity and a greater experience of *dukkha*, but at the same time there is also greater sensitivity towards mind-states of lust, hatred and delusion: they are also experienced as *dukkha*. Thus, even though the meditator becomes more sensitive to *dukkha*, he at the same time does not get upset over it. The calmness we may find in the meditator is not that he no longer experiences *dukkha*, far from it: it is that he no longer gets caught in the situation, and no longer get excited over it. It is difficult to get excited when one experiences excitement as *dukkha*.

That is why this kind of sensitivity, born of knowing and seeing, is not to be

compared with the sensitivity of conceit, for example, the ~~modern~~ paranoia of Political Correctness. Such sensitivity arises out of lust, hatred, and delusion, most notably conceit. When we get easily hurt and upset it is owing to overweening conceit and self-importance.

THE NOBLE TRUTH OF SUFFERING: THE FIRST NOBLE TRUTH

**A**nd what, bhikkhus, is birth? The birth of the various beings into the various orders of beings, their being born, descent, production, the appearance of the aggregates, the acquisition of the sense bases: this is called birth.

**A**nd what, bhikkhus, is ageing&death? The ageing of various beings in the various orders of beings, their growing old, brokenness of teeth, greyness of hair, wrinkling of skin, decline of vitality, degeneration of the faculties: this is called ageing.

**T**he passing-away of the various beings from the various orders of beings, their perishing, break-up, disappearance, mortality, death, completion of time, the break-up of the aggregates, the laying down of the carcass, the cutting off of the life faculty: this is called death.

(D.ii.9 ‘*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta’) — S.II.I.i.2 ‘*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Analysis Sutta’) — M.I.i.9 ‘*Sammā-Diṭṭhi-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Right View Sutta’))

THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE ORIGIN OF SUFFERING: THE SECOND NOBLE TRUTH

**A**nd what, bhikkhus, is dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppādo*)?

Birth is the condition, bhikkhus, for ageing&death (*jāti-paccayā, bhikkhave, jarā-maraṇaṃ*).

Whether there is the appearance of Tathagātas, or the non-appearance of Tathāgatas, there exists this element (*dhātu*), the fixity of the Dhamma (*Dhamma-tṭhitatā*), the natural order of the Dhamma (*Dhamma-niyāmatā*): causality (*idappaccayatā*).

A Tathāgata awakens to this, and penetrates it. Having done so, He explains it, teaches it, discloses it, establishes it, analyses it, elucidates it.

(S.II.I.ii.10 ‘*Paccaya-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Conditions Sutta’))

**A**nd what, bhikkhus (*katamañ-ca, bhikkhave*), is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*Dukkha-Samudayaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ*)?

- Ignorance is the condition for formation (*avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā*);
- formation is the condition for consciousness (*saṅkhāra-paccayā viññāṇaṃ*);
- consciousness is the condition for mind-matter (*viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṃ*);
- mind-matter is the condition for the six bases (*nāma-rūpa-paccayā saḷ-āyatanaṃ*);
- the six bases are the condition for contact (*saḷ-āyatana-paccayā phasso*);
- contact is the condition for sensation (*phassa-paccayā vedanā*);
- sensation is the condition for craving (*vedanā-paccayā taṇhā*);
- craving is the condition for clinging (*taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṃ*);
- clinging is the condition for coming-into-existence (*upādāna-paccayā bhavo*);
- coming-into-existence is the condition for birth (*bhava-paccayā jāti*);
- birth is the condition for ageing&death (*jāti-paccayā jarā-maraṇaṃ*), sorrow, lamentation, pain (*soka, parideva, dukkha*), grief and despair’s arising (*domanass-upāyāsā sambhavanti*).

Such is the origin of this whole mass of *dukkha* (*evam-etassa kevalassa dukkha-kkhandhassa samudayo hoti*).

This is called, bhikkhus (*idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave*), the Noble Truth of the Origin of *Dukkha* (*Dukkha-Samudayaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ*).

(A.III.II.ii.1 ‘*Tiṭṭh-Āyatana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Sectarian Doctrines Sutta’))



BIRTH, AGEING&DEATH  
The First Noble Truth: The Noble Truth of Suffering

**BHANTE, I HAVE SO MANY PROBLEMS** ..... 21

AGGREGATES	CESSATION	-ageing	IGNORANCE	<b>Origination</b>	<i>SAMSĀRA</i>
5 kinds	dependent-	-death	confusion	dependent-	analysis
11 kinds		-disliked	infatuation	<b>PROBLEMS</b>	<b>SIMILE</b>
55 kinds	<i>DUKKHA</i> :	-delivery	-mother of birth	analysis	burden
clinging-	2 responses	<del>like</del>	KAMMA	solution	excrement
existing-	-5 clinging	-gestation	old-	<b>REBIRTH</b>	horse
inexistent-	aggregates	<del>wanted</del>	NIBBĀNA	statistics	
why so called	-abortion	-sickness	2fold		

**THE ORIGIN OF BIRTH, AGEING&DEATH**  
The Origin of the First Noble Truth: the Second Noble Truth  
(Dependent Origination)

**IS THERE LIFE ON MARS?** ..... 39

AGEING&DEATH	modern science	condition	IDENTITY VIEW	QUESTIONS
analysis	the media	kamma-	5 aggregates	-bodhisatta
condition	BIRTH	rebirth-	20 kinds	-modern Man
ANNIHILATION VIEW	analysis	resultant-	analysis	
alcohol abuse	condition	CRAVING	condition	<b>RULE&amp;RITE</b>
anorexia	THE BUDDHA	18 types	democratic-	amulets-
bulimia	first thoughts	advertising	equality-	blessings-
drug abuse	the declared	analysis	historical-	bodily mutilation-
euthanasia	the undeclared	development	inferiority-	food-
low self-esteem	CLINGING	progress	-life	holy water-
materialism	4 kinds-	entertainment	militant/radical-	keep-fit-
modern orthodoxy	analysis	fashion	-modern 'issues'	mantras-
modern science	condition	industry	-modern orthodoxy	secret-
self-hatred	COMING-INTO-	modern science	-nationality	sports-
sensualism	EXISTENCE	technology	-health	-w/wrong view
suicide	3 kinds-		-youth	-w/Right View
-with rebirth	4 aggregates-	ETERNITY VIEW	-paranoia	WRONG VIEW
-without rebirth	5 aggregates-	one mind	-morality	annihilation-
ANSWERS	5 destinations	original mind	-sex	eternity-
the bodhisatta	analysis	soul	-superiority	
	causal-			

**ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER** ..... 65

6 BASES	CONTACT	analysis	4 great elements	MODERN SCIENCE
analysis	6 kinds	-cup of coffee	ultimate-	limitations
condition	analysis	KAMMA RESULT	MIND	SENSATION
external-	condition	when	analysis	3 kinds
internal-	CRAVING	where	condition	analysis
	why	MATTER	MIND-MATTER	condition
CONSCIOUSNESS	DEPENDENT	analysis	analysis	SIMILE
6 kinds	ORIGINATION	derived-	why	monkey
	-4 Noble Truths			

**IS AND APPEARS PROFOUND** ..... 77

CONSCIOUSNESS	& mind-matter	DHAMMA	MIND-MATTER	SIMILE
6 kinds	& sensation	= dependent	-birth	2 sheaves
analysis	simile, fires	origination	-development	6 fires
-of dependent origin	CONSCIOUSNESS	-own experience		THE BUDDHA
-descent into womb	&MIND-MATTER	- concepts	PERCEPTION	misrepresentation
-limit of discernment	analysis	ETERNITY VIEW	& consciousness	of
this life	conception	one mind-	& sensation	WRONG VIEW
-origin beyond	inseparable	original mind-	SENSATION	-bhikkhu Sāti
this life	'Mahā Nidāna-Suttam'	-origin	& consciousness	eternity-
& perception	simile, sheaves	reincarnation-	& perception	identity-
		soul-		



<b>MOTHER OF MOTHERS</b> .....					<b>89</b>
CONSCIOUSNESS	FORMATION	-wish for rebirth	KAMMA	-old	
condition	analysis	IGNORANCE	▶▶ happy destination	-results when	
-limit of discernment	causal-	analysis	▶▶ unhappy destination		
this life	definition	-not first cause	-10 types impure	MAN	
DHAMMA	-harmful/-less	-10 nutriments	-10 types pure	explanation-	
-‘easy’	-definition	IGNORANCE	-3 doors	REBIRTH	
-‘original’	& rebirth	= dependent cessation	analysis	analysis	
-own views	resultant-	37 requisites for-	-heritage	where	
-undemocratic	condition			condition	
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Today's talk is about birth, ageing&death, which is the First Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukkham Ariya-Saccam*): but first some statistics.

Once The Buddha took up a bit of soil onto His fingernail and asked:<sup>1</sup>

**What do you think, bhikkhus, which is more: the little bit of soil on my fingernail or the great earth?**

(Bhante, the great earth is more.... Compared to the great earth the little bit of soil that the Exalted One has taken up onto His fingernail is incalculable, does not bear comparison, does not amount even to a fraction.)

**So too, bhikkhus, those beings are few who, when they pass away as human beings, are reborn among human beings.**

**But those beings are more numerous who, when they pass away as human beings, are reborn in hell.... the animal realm...<sup>2</sup> ...the ghost realm....**

This The Buddha knew because He could see it.<sup>3</sup>

Have the statistics changed? Are the statistics more favourable? They are, alas, much less favourable, because the quality of human beings and their conduct deteriorates all the time. The Buddha saw it and explained it, and we may find corroborating evidence of it all day and everywhere, for example, in the newspaper, and on TV.

But why are the statistics so? Why do human beings invariably end up in hell, as animals or as ghosts? It is, says The Buddha, owing to ignorance:<sup>4</sup>

**Because, bhikkhus, they have not seen the Four Noble Truths. What four?**

[1] **The Noble Truth of Suffering** (*Dukkham Ariya-Saccam*)

[2] **The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering** (*Dukkha-Samudayam Ariya-Saccam*)

[3] **The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering** (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccam*)

[4] **The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering** (*Dukkha-Nirodha-Gāmini-Paṭipadā Ariya-Saccam*)<sup>5</sup>

Do you think you are outside the statistics? Do you think you are safe and sound, and need not bother about the Four Noble Truths?

We always think bad statistics are about other people and good statistics are about ourselves. If we did not think so, we would not behave the way we do, and the statistics would be quite different. But to think that everything is just fine is natural, because stupidity is natural. The Buddha explains this with the simile of the four types of fine thoroughbred horse.<sup>6</sup>

A fine thoroughbred horse is well bred, well trained, and of the best family: not a common, natural horse. The Buddha explains that the first type of fine thoroughbred horse is stirred to obedience and work merely by the seeing the shadow of the whip. But the second type of fine thoroughbred horse is stirred only when the whip touches his coat. The third type is stirred only when he

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<sup>1</sup> S.V.XII.xi.1 *'Manussa-Cuti-Niraya-Suttam'* ('Human Rebirth in Hell Sutta'), *ibid.* 2 *'Tiracchāna-Suttam'* ('- Animal Sutta'), *ibid.* 3 *'Petti Visaya-'* ('- Ghost Realm Sutta')

<sup>2</sup> For details, please see also below Appendix III 'Formation and Rebirth', p.115ff.

<sup>3</sup> For The Buddha's ability to see how beings are reborn, please see below, p.29.

<sup>4</sup> For The Buddha's analysis of ignorance and its causes, please see below, p.104ff.

<sup>5</sup> Please see further The Buddha's explanation given below, p.100.

<sup>6</sup> A.IV.III.ii.3 *'Patoda-Suttam'* ('Whip Sutta')

feels the whip on his flesh, and the fourth type only when he is thrashed with the whip. Likewise, says The Buddha, the first type of fine well-bred person is stirred upon hearing that in such and such a place someone is afflicted or has died, and stops fooling around, and starts work on the Dhamma. But the second type of fine well-bred person is stirred only upon seeing someone who is afflicted or dead. The third type is stirred only when the afflicted or dead person is a relative or kinsman, and the fourth type only when he himself suffers serious and dreadful pains that drain his life away.

Then there is the horse, of course, that is never stirred to obedience and action, no matter how much he is thrashed. The Buddha does not here mention such a horse, because it is not a fine thoroughbred. Likewise, the human being who does not learn no matter how much suffering he hears about, sees and himself experiences, cannot be called a fine well-bred person: such a person is what The Buddha calls a fool (*bāla*). The Buddha explains that<sup>7</sup>

- the thoroughbred fool sees the **young tender infant, lying face down, fouled in his own excrement and urine;**
- the thoroughbred fool sees **a man (or woman) at eighty, ninety, or a hundred years, aged, as crooked as a roof bracket, doubled up, supported by a walking stick, tottering, frail, youth gone, teeth broken, grey-haired, scanty-haired, bald, wrinkled, with limbs all blotchy;**
- the thoroughbred fool sees **a man (or woman) afflicted, suffering, and gravely ill, lying fouled in his own excrement and urine, lifted up by some and set down by others;**
- the thoroughbred fool sees **a man (or woman) one day dead, two days dead, three days dead, bloated, livid and oozing with matter,**

yet it does not occur to the thoroughbred fool to **do good by body, speech and mind.**

Nowadays, of course, with sensuality deified, this foolishness prevails so much more, because many realities are concealed: the sick are hidden away in hospital, the dead are given make-up and quickly burnt or hidden underground, and to speak of these things is said to be morbid. Parents are even told the realities of ageing, sickness and death are unhealthy for the child to know about, whereas fairytales, Walt Disney, and pop-songs are not, and the cultivation of physical vanity and conceit through competitive sports is positively encouraged: a national treasure.

The horses were stirred by the whip of their owner, and human beings by the whip of *dukkha*. *Dukkha* is the first Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering, and that is where it all starts.

What is *dukkha*? The Buddha explains:<sup>8</sup>

**birth is *dukkha*, ageing is *dukkha*, sickness is *dukkha*, death is *dukkha*; association with what one dislikes is *dukkha*, dissociation from what one likes is *dukkha*, not to get what one wants is *dukkha*: in short, the five clinging-aggregates are *dukkha*.**

The Pali Texts<sup>9</sup> explain that the Noble Truth of Suffering is the first of the

<sup>7</sup> M.III.iii.10 ‘*Deva-Dūta-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Deva Messengers Sutta’)

<sup>8</sup> S.V.XII.ii.1 ‘*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta’)

<sup>9</sup> All references to ‘The Texts’ are here to Vis.xvi (‘Description of the Truths’) PoP.13ff.

## Four Noble Truths

since it is easy to understand because of its grossness and because it is common to all beings.

One way to understand the nature of *dukkha* is to look at the two responses to *dukkha*. The Buddha explains:<sup>10</sup>

**When someone is overcome, and his mind is obsessed by *dukkha*,**

[1] **either he grieves and laments, and beating his breast, he weeps and becomes distraught,**

[2] **or else he undertakes a search externally [thinking]: ‘Who is there that knows one word, two words, for the cessation of *dukkha*?’**

**Either bewilderment is the result, bhikkhus, of *dukkha*, I declare, or a search is the result.**

To get bewildered by *dukkha* is to indulge in *dukkha* (to make it bigger); to search is to try to do something about it (to make it smaller).

We have all seen this. When we or someone dear to us gets sick or dies, almost all of us become distraught. Parents get distraught when their children are sick, children when their parents are, husband when wife is, wife when husband is, friend when friend is, pupil when teacher is, and we get distraught at our own sickness. When the sickness is serious, the suffering is equally more serious, and when there is death, we may even get deranged. Many are the parents who never get over the death of a child, children who grieve year after year because a parent died, husband who grieves over his deceased wife, etc. People start drinking because of such grief, they neglect their work and themselves, and the mental sickness leads eventually to more mental sickness and physical sickness. It is a fact that some people develop, for example, depression, schizophrenia, cancer, Parkinson’s disease, a heart problem, and peptic ulcers at the time of grief, and some die of grief; even animals.

With the *saṃsaṃsāra*, universal orthodoxy of sensuality, youth, bodily health and life,<sup>11</sup> the confusion that arises at the experience of *dukkha* is so much the worse, and so much less can be done about it. It is delusion of the deepest dye (confused thinking and confused values), and leads invariably to further confusion: delusion begets delusion.<sup>12</sup>

But, explained The Buddha, there are those who do not indulge in *dukkha*, and are not too bewildered, and who go looking for a solution. That too we have all seen, all over the world. Talk to any doctor and he will tell you how there will be the rare patient in hospital who starts thinking about life, and starts reading something other than the newspaper, starts talking about something other than the family, politics or sports. Unfortunately, this happens only rarely, and most people forget all about it when they recover: until next time. When the disease is fatal, or when people are on their deathbed, or when a loved one has died, this same constructive reaction will sometimes take place, and it is at such times that some people begin to meditate. Their *dukkha* makes way for the time that they claimed never to have. Even so, this response is very, very rare, as it is rooted in wisdom, which goes against nature: wisdom is unnatural.

The *dukkha* of sickness, ageing&death is clearly not difficult to understand.

<sup>10</sup> A.VI.vi.9 ‘*Nibbedhika-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Penetrating Sutta’)

<sup>11</sup> For these three infatuations/conceits, please see footnote 48, p.51.

<sup>12</sup> The Buddha explains: ‘Not, bhikkhus, from delusion does non-delusion arise: it is, bhikkhus, delusion that arises from delusion.’ (A.VI.I.iv.9 ‘*Nidāna-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Origins Sutta’))

The *dukkha* of birth, however, is perhaps less commonly understood, or shall we say, accepted. There is not much awareness of how the gestation of the child is (for the mother and even more the child) fraught with immense *dukkha*. The Texts describe the excessive *dukkha* of the child in the womb, and the torment of delivery. Look at the child that has just been delivered, and see a face ag-grieved, as you have never seen it before. But we do not look at the face, do we? We look at ‘MY son’ and ‘MY daughter’ and ‘ME’, and pretend birth is a beautiful event, when everyone knows it is an ordeal of painful sights, painful sounds, painful odours, and painful touches, as are also ageing, sickness and death: the other highlights of life.

When the Texts explain the *dukkha* of abortion, they say:

**the pain that arises in the baby through the cutting and rending in the place where the pain arises is not fit to be seen even by friends, intimates, and companions.**

It is in Man’s ignorant nature to keep all these realities secret, but with the ◻◻◻◻◻◻ and universal deification of sensuality, to merely suggest that these realities exist has become tantamount to committing blasphemy: speakers of the truth must beware more than ever.

Then there is the *dukkha* described by The Buddha as **association with what one dislikes**. He explains:<sup>13</sup>

**Whoever has unwanted, disliked, unpleasant sights, sounds, odours, flavours, touches or other things, or whoever associates with people who wish them ill, wish them harm, discomfort, and insecurity.... That is called association with what one dislikes.**

This type of *dukkha* is merely the experience of unpleasant sensation (*dukkha vedanā*), and it takes place throughout our human day, from minute to minute, from second to second. But it is more complicated because it depends on our perception (*saññā*). Take, for example, the discomfort in our body that makes us shift our limbs all the time, or the sight of a rat dead in a trap, the sound of a child crying, the smell of insect-killer or the taste of coffee without sugar. We may say these things give rise to *dukkha*, but it depends.

Some people shift their bodies all the time, which can be the symptom of a scattered mind or because they are attached to their body. Then look at bhikkhus who have practised meditation and restraint of the body, and notice how some of them hardly ever move a limb. Their meditation has reduced attachment to the body. That is why the Texts say the **function of bodily pain is to cause grief in the foolish**.

Then there is the housewife who set the trap for the rat: she will at first experience unpleasant sensation at the sight of the rat dead, but with further thought, further mental formations (*sañkhārā*), it changes to pleasant sensation (*sukha vedanā*): ‘Got you!’ She may also perceive the smell of insect killer as pleasant, because it means dead mosquitoes and cockroaches, her arch-enemies. And we have all seen how children can delight in making each other cry, and one of the many ◻◻◻◻◻◻ dogmas is to pontificate against sugar in one’s coffee. Thus, as The Buddha explained once to King Pasenadi:<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> D.II.9 ‘*Mahā-Sati-paṭṭhāna-Suttam*’ (‘Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta’)

<sup>14</sup> S.I.III.ii.2 ‘*Pañca-Rāja-Suttam*’ (‘Five Kings Sutta’)

The same sights, Your Majesty, are pleasing to one, and displeasing to another...the same sounds... odours... flavours... touches, Your Majesty, are pleasing to one, and displeasing to another.

This diversity in the experience of *dukkha* is found also in the *dukkha* The Buddha describes as **dissociation from what one likes**. It is simply the opposite of the previous. That was to be joined with what one does not like and this one is to be separated from what one does like: for example, the mother dropping her son off at school in the morning, and the son bored during the school holidays, missing all his friends from school that he used to play and talk with. A parking ticket is also such *dukkha* because we have to part from our precious money without getting any sensual pleasure in return, which is also why it is *dukkha* to pay taxes. And it is *dukkha* to get lost (to be dissociated with the familiar), to lose at gambling, to lose one's wallet, to lose one's temper, and to be unable to find one's keys.

The Buddha explained *dukkha* also as **not to get what one wants**. He explains that it is to wish for something which cannot be obtained:<sup>15</sup>

In beings subject to ageing, sickness, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair this wish arises: 'Oh, that we were not subject to ageing, sickness, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair, that we might not come to these things!'

What one wants is what one hopes for or expects. Everyone hopes not to age, get sick, and die, etc.; the father hopes his expectant wife will have a son, and his expectant wife hopes she will have a daughter, and they both expect the child will be a gorgeous angel who is very kind, very clever, very polite, and is never ever sick, etc. Their disappointment begins with the harrowing experience of child-birth, and continues throughout the child's life, for the child is no less subject to ageing, sickness and death than they are; the old woman hopes the doctor will cure her of her dreadful arthritis, but the pain continues because it is a symptom of ageing; the doctor sees all his patients suffering, and wishes he could cure them all of every ailment, but it is a losing battle; now the farmer hopes it will rain, another time he hopes it will not, and the weather devas do as they like; we run to catch the bus but miss it; the dog hopes to get some food from the dinner table but is scolded. Our entire life and throughout every single day, from minute to minute, indeed, from second to second, we go from one hope and expectation to the next, and hardly ever are they fulfilled as we want them to be fulfilled. The pang of disappointment, gross and subtle, is *dukkha*.

Looking back at The Buddha's analysis of *dukkha*, we may thus understand that *dukkha* is an inextricable part of human existence. That is why, when The Buddha explains that **birth is *dukkha***, He means ultimately that simply having been reborn is *dukkha*. He explains:<sup>16</sup>

The birth of the various beings into the various orders of beings, their being born, descent, production, the appearance of the aggregates, the acquisition of the sense bases. This is called birth.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> D.II.9 '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta') Also in, for example, S.II.I.i.2 '*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Analysis Sutta'), and M.I.i.9 '*Sammā-Diṭṭhi-Suttaṃ*' ('Right View Sutta')

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> The Commentary explains that 'birth of the various beings into the various orders of being, their being born, descent, production' is birth explained according to conventional teaching

Thus, birth is nothing other than the birth of *dukkha*, descent of *dukkha*, production of *dukkha*, the appearance of *dukkha*, and acquisition of *dukkha*: in whatever realm.

Even when we are reborn in some of the higher deva-, and Brahma realms we experience only the most exquisite pleasant sensations all the time, but there is *dukkha* nonetheless, because our lifespan there will eventually come to an end, and who knows then where we may go?

We can go on and on and on and on discussing the different types of *dukkha*, but the Texts explain:

**It is impossible to tell it without remainder, showing each kind of *dukkha*, even [if one did so] for many aeons, so the Exalted One said: ‘In short, the five clinging-aggregates are *dukkha*.’**

The five clinging-aggregates (*pañc-upādāna-kkhandhā*) are: matter (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations (*saṅkhārā*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*)

Without the five clinging-aggregates, *dukkha* would not exist, and with the five clinging-aggregates, it is impossible that *dukkha* does not exist.

**Birth, ageing, sickness, death, association with what one dislikes, dissociation from what one likes, and not to get what one wants** we can all understand, but very few of us understand the term **five clinging-aggregates** (*pañc-upādāna-kkhandhā*). (Most of us experience *dukkha* at the sound of terms like ‘the five clinging-aggregates’.)

The five aggregates are five aspects of human existence. The Buddha describes human existence from many aspects: it depends on whom He is talking to and why. He explains:<sup>18</sup>

‘This is the Noble Truth of Suffering.’ Such has been made known by Me.

In the statement, ‘This is the Noble Truth of Suffering’, there are innumerable nuances, innumerable elucidations, innumerable illustrations.

Thus, for example, He describes human existence

- as the six bases: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind;<sup>19</sup>
- as the twelve bases: the eye and sights, the ear and sounds, the nose and odours, the tongue and flavours, the body and touches, the mind and other things (*dhammā*);<sup>20</sup>
- as the five aggregates;
- as just two things: mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*)  
(*nāma* = the four aggregates;<sup>21</sup> sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), for-

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(*voḥāra-desanā*), whereas ‘the appearance of the aggregates, the acquisition of the sense bases’ is according to ultimate teaching (*param-attha-desanā*). For this distinction in The Buddha’s Teachings, please see also below, footnote 9, p.43.

<sup>18</sup> S.V.XII.ii.9 ‘*Saṅkāsana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Illustration Sutta’)

<sup>19</sup> The Buddha also summarizes the First Noble Truth as these six bases. (S.V.XII.ii.4 ‘*Ajjhattik-Āyatana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Internal Bases Sutta’))

<sup>20</sup> OTHER THINGS (*dhammā*): the meaning of *dhammā* in this context is the same as the meaning of the English THINGS: ‘Any possible object of thought including persons, material objects, events, qualities, circumstances, utterances, and acts (*all things*, the universe)... [POD]’ ‘a fact: an even, happening, action: an entity: that which exists or can be thought of... [CTCD]’

<sup>21</sup> Here, *nāma* (mind) is explained from the aspect of the five aggregates. Explaining mind from the point-of-view of dependent origination, it is sensation, perception, volition, contact and attention (please see The Buddha’s explanation below, p.71. From the aspect of the five aggregates,

mations (*saṅkhārā*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*); *rūpa* = the first aggregate: matter);

- as one thing only: the formed (*saṅkhata*),<sup>22</sup> or as only *dukkha*.

But what is an aggregate? In Pali it is *khandha*, which can be translated as group, body, whole, collection, category or aggregate. But why are the aggregates called aggregates? A bhikkhu asked this very question, and The Buddha explained that each aggregate is called an aggregate because each aggregate is an aggregate of eleven aggregates. He explained, for example:<sup>23</sup>

**Whatever kind of matter (*rūpa*) there is, whether**

[1-3] **past, future, or present** (*atīt-ānāgata paccuppannaṃ*);

[4-5] **internal or external** (*ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddhā vā*);

[6-7] **gross or subtle** (*olārikaṃ vā sukhumāṃ vā*);

[8-9] **inferior or superior** (*hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā*);

[10-11] **far or near** (*yaṃ dūre santike vā*);

**this is called the matter aggregate (*rūpa-kkhandho*).**

The remaining four aggregates (sensation, perception, formations and consciousness) each comprises these eleven aggregates.

What then, is matter? The Buddha explains:<sup>24</sup>

- **The four great elements** (*cattāro ca mahābhūtā*),

- **And matter derived from the four great elements** (*catunnañca mahā-bhūtānaṃ upādāya-rūpaṃ*).

**This is called matter (*rūpa*).**

The four great elements are earth-, water-, fire- and air element, and matter derived from them is, for example, colour, odour, flavour, and sound.<sup>25</sup> They are the aggregate of matter, which The Buddha then aggregates further into the eleven aggregates. For example:<sup>26</sup>

- Past, future or present matter: this can be matter of past lives, of this life and of future lives, or of this second, the second before and the second after.
- Internal or external matter: internal is one's own matter (of past, future or present); external is the matter of other beings and inanimate things (of past, future or present);
- inferior or superior matter: this can be matter in the different planes of existence (increasingly gross as we go down; increasingly subtle as we go

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the latter three of these (volition, contact and attention) are included in formations. Also, when explaining dependent origination, The Buddha explains consciousness separately from mind-matter, while explaining also that they are inseparable. For details, please see below, 'Is and Appears Profound', p.79ff.

<sup>22</sup> Please see The Buddha's explanation below, footnote 10, p. 67, and His explanation below, p.255.

<sup>23</sup> M.III.i.9 'Mahā-Puṇṇama-Suttaṃ' ('Great Fullmoon-Night Sutta')

<sup>24</sup> S.II.I.i.2 'Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ' ('Analysis Sutta')

<sup>25</sup> For a brief explanation of each of the four great elements, and matter derived from them, please see below p.71ff.

<sup>26</sup> For details, please see Vis.xiv 'Khandha-Niddesa' ('Aggregate Description'), PoP.85ff.



up), etc.<sup>27</sup>

And there are also these aggregates of eleven aggregates of sensation, perception, formations, and consciousness: that makes fifty-five aggregates.<sup>28</sup> When The Buddha says that (to understand things as they really are) we must know and see the five aggregates, He means we must know and see these fifty-five aggregates.

Why? Because only by knowing and seeing all fifty-five aggregates is it possible to understand that all formations are impermanent, suffering and non-self. The Buddha explains that with no such knowledge of matter:<sup>29</sup>

**a bhikkhu is incapable (*bhikkhu abhabbo*) of growth, increase and fulfilment (*vuddhiṃ, virūlhiṃ, vepullamaṃ*) in this Dhamma-Vinaya (*imasmim Dhamma-Vinaye*).**

**And how has a bhikkhu no knowledge of matter (*na rūp-aññū hoti*)?**

**Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu as it really is does not understand (*yathā-bhūtaṃ na-ppajānāti*): 'Whatever matter, all matter (*yaṃ kiñci rūpaṃ, sabbaṃ rūpaṃ*) consists of the four great elements, and matter derived from the four great elements.'**

**That is how a bhikkhu has no knowledge of matter.**

We see thus that The Buddha's perspective is not the short-sighted, blinkered perspective of one life, one aspect in one period in one world, one world cycle, etc. That is a deficient aspect that can lead to only deficient understanding, wrong understanding. It could be compared to the man with first degree burns all over his body who arrives at the emergency ward, and the doctor sees only, and treats only (can see only, and can treat only), the man's lacerated finger. The Buddha's perspective, however, is the man's whole burning body: the whole burning body of mind (*nāma-kāya*), and the whole burning body of matter

<sup>27</sup> The Buddha explains also: 'The four great elements, bhikkhu, are the cause and condition for the manifestation of the matter aggregate.' (M.III.i.9 '*Mahā-Puṇṇama-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Fullmoon-Night Sutta'))

<sup>28</sup> The Buddha explains: 'Contact (*phasso*) is the cause and condition for the manifestation of the sensation-... perception-... formations aggregate. Mind-matter (*nāma-rūpa*) is the cause and condition for the manifestation of the consciousness aggregate.' (ibid.) For a discussion of contact and subsequent sensation, please see below, p.69. For a discussion of mind-matter and consciousness, please see the talk below, 'Is and Appears Profound', p.79ff.

<sup>29</sup> The Buddha explains: 'Possessed of eleven qualities, a bhikkhu is incapable of growth, increase and fulfilment in this Dhamma-Vinaya. Here, a [1] bhikkhu has no knowledge of matter [please see subsequent explanation by The Buddha], [2] he is unskilled in characteristics [he is unable to distinguish a fool from a wise man: please see quotation below, footnote.20, p.285], [3] he fails to pick out flies' eggs [he tolerates unwholesome thoughts], [4] he fails to dress wounds [he does not restrain his eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind], [5] he fails to smoke out the sheds [he does not teach the Dhamma in detail as he has learned it], [6] he does not know the watering place [please see below, p.107ff], [7] he does not know what it means to have drunk [please see below, p.107ff], [8] he does not know the road [he does not understand the Noble Eightfold Path as it actually is], [9] he is unskilled in the pastures [he does not understand the four foundations of mindfulness as they really are], [10] he milks dry [he asks too much from his patrons], [11] and he shows no extra veneration to those elder bhikkhus of long-standing, who have long gone forth, the fathers and leaders of the Sangha [he does not maintain acts of lovingkindness through body, speech and mind towards the learned elder bhikkhus].' Only when possessed of the opposite eleven qualities is the bhikkhu capable of growth, increase and fulfilment in this Dhamma-Vinaya. (M.I.iv.3 '*Mahā-Gopālaka-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Cowherd Sutta'))

(*rūpa-kāya*),<sup>30</sup> the infinite perspective of the Dhamma, which is existence in its entirety: all aspects of infinite time and infinite space in all its densities.

Almost none of this can be seen with the material eye, of course, which is one reason why the range of modern science (which depends on material technology) is so negligible, and their understanding superficial, and therefore deficient and distorted. But, depending on the power of mental technology (concentration (*Samatha*) and insight (*Vipassanā*)), we can all see it with the eye of wisdom. A Buddha's such eye is uniquely powerful, which is why, when He for example explains how the fool goes to hell, He can say:<sup>31</sup>

**I tell you this, bhikkhus, not as something I heard from another ascetic or Brahmin;  
I tell you this as something I have actually known, seen, and discovered for Myself.**

But what is the difference between the five aggregates (*pañca-kkhandhā*) and the five clinging-aggregates (*pañc-upādāna-kkhandhā*)? The Buddha explains:<sup>32</sup>

**The five aggregates, bhikkhus, I shall teach you (*pañca, bhikkhave, khandhe desessāmi*), the five clinging-aggregates too (*pañc-upādāna-kkhandhe ca*).**

**Listen (*taṃ suṇātha*). And what, bhikkhus, are the five aggregates (*pañca-kkhandhā*)?**

- [1] **Whatever kind of matter there is, whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: this is called the matter aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati rūpa-kkhandho*).**
- [2] **Whatever kind of sensation there is, whether past, future or present... far or near: this is called the sensation aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati vedanā-kkhandho*).**
- [3] **Whatever kind of perception there is, whether past, future or present... far or near: this is called the perception aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati saññā-kkhandho*).**
- [4] **Whatever kind of formations there are, whether past, future or present... far or near: this is called the formations aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati saṅkhāra-kkhandho*).**
- [5] **Whatever kind of consciousness there is, whether past, future or present... far or near: this is called the consciousness aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati viññāṇa-kkhandho*).**

**These are called, bhikkhus, the five aggregates (*Ime vuccanti, bhikkhave, pañca-kkhandhā*).**

And then The Buddha explains the five clinging-aggregates:

**And what, bhikkhus, are the five clinging-aggregates (*pañc-upādāna-kkhandhā*)?**

- [1] **Whatever kind of matter there is, whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, that is tainted (*s-āsavaṃ*), that can be clung to (*upādāniyaṃ*), this is called the matter clinging-aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati rūp-upādāna-kkhandho*).**
- [2] **Whatever kind of sensation there is, whether past, future or present... far or near: that is tainted, that can be clung to, this is called the sensation clinging-aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati vedan-upādāna-kkhandho*).**

<sup>30</sup> The Buddha explains: 'All, bhikkhus, is burning. And what, bhikkhus, is the all that is burning? The eye is burning, sights are burning, eye-consciousness is burning, eye-contact is burning, and the sensation that arises with eye-contact, be it pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, it too is burning.... the ear.... the nose.... the tongue.... the body.... the mind.... Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of delusion; burning with birth, ageing and death; with sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair, I declare.' (Vin: *Mahā-Vagga* i.12 '*Uruvela-Pāṭihāriya Kathā*' ('Uruvela Miracles Discourse'); S.IV.I.i.iii.6 '*Āditta-Suttaṃ*' ('Burning Sutta' [Also known as the 'Fire Sermon'] ) 'Matter, bhikkhus, is burning. Sensation is burning. Perception is burning. Formation is burning. Consciousness is burning.' (S.III.I.vi.9 '*Āditta-Suttaṃ*' ('Burning Sutta'))).

<sup>31</sup> M.III.iii.10 '*Deva-Dūta-Suttaṃ*' ('Deva Messengers Sutta')

<sup>32</sup> S.III.I.v.6 '*Khandha-Suttaṃ*' ('Aggregate Sutta')

- [3] Whatever kind of perception there is, whether past, future or present... far or near: that is tainted, that can be clung to, this is called the perception clinging-aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati saññ-upādāna-kkhandho*).
- [4] Whatever kind of formations there are, whether past, future or present... far or near: that is tainted, that can be clung to, this is called the formations clinging-aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati saṅkhār-upādāna-kkhandho*).
- [5] Whatever kind of consciousness there is, whether past, future or present... far or near: that is tainted, that can be clung to, this is called the consciousness clinging-aggregate (*ayaṃ vuccati viññāṇ-upādāna-kkhandho*).

These are called, bhikkhus, the five clinging-aggregates (*Ime vuccanti, bhikkhave, pañc-upādāna-kkhandhā*).

The difference is thus that the five aggregates are merely the five aggregates, whereas the five clinging-aggregates are the five aggregates seen as things that **can be clung to** (*upādāniya*).<sup>33</sup> But what does it mean that the five aggregates are clung to? It means unenlightened ignorant beings cling to them with desire,<sup>34</sup> as happiness, security, etc. The Buddha explains that such aggregates are **with taints** (*s-āsava*), tainted with the three taints:

- 1) the taint of sensuality (*kām-āsava*)
- 2) the taint of coming-into-existence (*bhav-āsava*)
- 3) the taint of ignorance (*avijj-āsava*)

What does that mean? Let us again take as example matter (*rūpa*), the matter clinging-aggregate (*rūp-upādāna-kkhandha*). There is *rūpa* that is our body, and *rūpa* that is outside our body: internal and external. Our body is possessed of life, which means it is animate, although, for example, the excrement and urine that we all carry around is inanimate. The *rūpa* outside our body is the animate bodies of other beings, and inanimate *rūpa* such as plants, water, air, stones, glass, plastic and indeed, the planet earth itself, and the infinite universe. All this is the aggregate of *rūpa*, and we cling to it as something that is delightful (the taint of sensuality), something that is everlasting (the taint of coming-into-existence; viz. the fool we mentioned before who is blind to ageing, sickness and death), and we cling to it as something that is ours, something that is us (the taint of ignorance, which is also the cause for the other two taints).

We think our material body is beautiful, but even modern science knows now that it is true when the Texts say the body is a myriad of worms.<sup>35</sup> Modern science confirms that our skin, even in the womb, is a myriad of worms, and inside the body there are myriads of myriads. And the bones, flesh, sinews, intestines, blood, phlegm, spit, snot, and sweat; the excrement and urine that we all carry around all the time: is that beautiful? Take it all away, and what is left?

<sup>33</sup> Further to clinging and the things clung to, please see The Buddha's explanation above, p. 52.

<sup>34</sup> The Buddha explains: 'These five clinging-aggregates, bhikkhu, are desire-rooted (*chanda-mūlaka*)... that clinging is neither the same as these five clinging-aggregates, nor is the clinging something apart from the five clinging-aggregates. It is the desire and lust (*chanda-rāgo*) in regard to the five clinging-aggregates that is the clinging there.' The commentary explains that in this context, *chanda* is a synonym for craving (*taṇhā*). (M.III.i.9 'Mahā-Puṇṇama-Suttaṃ' ('Great Fullmoon-Night Sutta')). Please see also below footnote 40, p.32, and The Buddha's explanation that craving is the condition for clinging, below, p.57.

<sup>35</sup> Vis.viii PoP.25 'Anussati Kammatthāna Niddesa' ('Recollection Meditation Subject Description')

Nothing, except space. That is how we may understand that to think the body is beautiful is to look at a phantom.

The fact that the body is all the time changing is also known now by modern science. Yet, we perceive it as permanent. And most of us cannot help thinking that our body is our self: the sporty, young man thinks his young and healthy body is his and is him, and the frail old man thinks his ageing and ailing body is his and is him. We also think this of the bodies of people who are dear to us: parents about their children's bodies, the children about their parents' bodies, the husband about his wife's body, she about his, etc. But because of our innate stupidity, we do not realize that we think like this: we take this delusion for granted, and do not for a moment question the truth of it. Modern science has a good idea about the realities of the body, but all they can do with that knowledge is delight over their ingenuity: which is the aggregate of sensation tainted with sensuality and ignorance.

To cling to the body and other *rūpa* in this way is natural, because to see things as they really are requires wisdom. And it is likewise natural to cling in this way to sensations, perceptions, formations and consciousnesses. They are mind (*nāma*), and we see them as delightful, as permanent, and as belonging to us; we see them as self, be they our own or those of others. And wanting *rūpa* to be always and forever beautiful is merely to say that whenever we see, hear, smell, taste and feel something (which is all *rūpa*), we want only beautiful sensations, beautiful perceptions, beautiful formations, and beautiful consciousnesses to arise: we want always and forever beautiful *nāma*.<sup>36</sup>

If *nāma-rūpa* were indeed ours, and therefore under our control, everything would be fine. We could simply decide: 'I want my material body and property, my sensations, perceptions, formations and consciousnesses to be always and forever beautiful.' We behave as if we could control things like that, yet the body goes the way of all flesh (gets old, sick and dies) regardless of our wishes, regardless of our many efforts to keep it young, healthy, beautiful and alive forever, and the world goes the way it wants to go too: we experience unbeautiful sights, sounds, odours, flavours and touches all the time. Nonetheless, because of our innate stupidity, we cling to the five aggregates as our source of happiness (we cling to them as permanent, happiness and self), and because they go the way they want to (are impermanent, are therefore *dukkha*, and therefore never ours), our life is nothing but liking and disliking (sensations, perceptions, formations and consciousnesses changing all the time), and that is not happiness, but *dukkha*.

Once, challenging The Buddha, a young sophist called Saccaka maintained the five aggregates are self.<sup>37</sup> So The Buddha asked him if he could himself decide how his five aggregates should be and not be. Saccaka had to admit (as we have just discussed) that he could not: he had to admit that the five aggregates are impermanent and subject to change regardless of what we want. Then The Buddha asked:

[1] **Is what is impermanent *dukkha* or happiness?** (*Dukkha*. Master Gotama.)

<sup>36</sup> For further details on clinging to the five aggregates as self, please see below, p.50.

<sup>37</sup> M.I.iv.5 '*Cūla-Saccaka-Suttaṃ*' ('Small Saccaka Sutta')

[2] Is what is impermanent, *dukkha* and subject to change fit to be regarded as: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self?’ (No, Master Gotama.)

Then The Buddha asked:

**When one adheres to *dukkha*, resorts to *dukkha*, holds to *dukkha*, and regards what is *dukkha* as: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self’, could one ever fully understand *dukkha* oneself, or abide with *dukkha* utterly destroyed?** (How could one, Master Gotama?)

Take, for example, the young couple, with their newly formed bond of matrimony (‘to have and to hold’), and their newly formed baby. We have all seen such a phenomenon, and we may even have been one of such a trio ourselves. The young man is infatuated with his wife, his wife is infatuated with him, and they are both infatuated with their baby. Life seems to be nothing other than unmitigated bliss: the young man thinks he and his wife are unique, she thinks she and her husband are unique, and they both think their baby is unique. They do not for a moment consider the fact that the world is full of unique, infatuated young couples, and full of unique newborn babies. They do not for a moment consider the fact that dogs, cats, rats, gekkos, cockroaches, mosquitoes, worms, fish, and birds also produce unique little babies, that this ongoing process of reproduction takes place at a tearing pace at all times everywhere (even in the sewers), and that it has been going on since the beginning of time.<sup>38</sup> The infatuated young couple do not for a moment consider the fact that any of the trio could die within the hour, that they will certainly get sick sooner or later, that they will all age, and that sooner or later they will all die. They do not consider that their life is now little more than a prison of worry about spouse and child. So unawares are they of these simple realities, that they will want to have another child, and another, and another: each time the mother screams as she delivers the child unto yet another life of suffering. When we are in this way infatuated with our life, health and youth,<sup>39</sup> we are able to concentrate on the deep Dhamma for little more than minutes, because all the time our mind adheres to the million beautiful things that fill our beautiful life, our mind resorts to the million beautiful things, holds to the million beautiful things, and regards the million beautiful things as: ‘**This is mine, this I am, this is my self**’. But, as The Buddha explains again and again, those million beautiful things are not beautiful at all;<sup>40</sup> they are *dukkha*. And what is more, they are only five things: the five aggregates. Thus, when we are in this way infatuated, we are in fact utterly confused, which means it is utterly inconceivable that we should recognize *dukkha*, understand *dukkha* or abide with *dukkha* utterly destroyed. We can say as Saccaka: ‘How could we?’<sup>41</sup>

Confusion resides in ignorance (*avijjā*). And so long as there are the three taints,<sup>42</sup> so long is there ignorance, so long are the aggregates clung to, so long

<sup>38</sup> Please see The Buddha’s explanation of this process below, p.115.

<sup>39</sup> For these three infatuations/conceits, please see footnote 48, p. 51.

<sup>40</sup> The Buddha explains: ‘Lustful intention (*saṅkappa-rāgo*) is Man’s sensuality; the beautiful things just stand there in the world.’ (A.VI.II.vi.9 ‘*Nibbedhika-Suttam*’ (‘Penetrating Sutta’)) Please see also above footnote 34, p.30.

<sup>41</sup> For a further analysis of this symptom by The Buddha, please see below, p.102.

<sup>42</sup> THREE TAINTS: please see above, p.30.

is there *dukkha*, and so long can *dukkha* not be fully understood. Ignorance is the mother of *dukkha* as ignorance is the mother of birth.<sup>43</sup>

The Buddha explains this in His ultimate analysis of the formation of existence, dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*), which is the Second Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering:<sup>44</sup>

**And what, bhikkhus (*katamañ-ca, bhikkhave*), is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*Dukkha-Samudayaṃ Ariya-Saccam*)?**

- **Ignorance is the condition for formation** (*Avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā*);
- **formation is the condition for consciousness** (*saṅkhāra-paccayā viññāṇam*);
- **consciousness is the condition for mind-matter** (*viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpam*);
- **mind-matter is the condition for the six bases** (*nāma-rūpa-paccayā saḷ-āyatanaṃ*);
- **the six bases are the condition for contact** (*saḷ-āyatana-paccayā phasso*);
- **contact is the condition for sensation** (*phassa-paccayā vedanā*);
- **sensation is the condition for craving** (*vedanā-paccayā taṇhā*);
- **craving is the condition for clinging** (*taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṃ*);
- **clinging is the condition for coming-into-existence** (*upādāna-paccayā bhavo*);
- **coming-into-existence is the condition for birth** (*bhava-paccayā jāti*);
- **birth is the condition for ageing&death** (*jāti-paccayā jarā-maraṇam*), **sorrow, lamentation, pain** (*soka, parideva, dukkha*), **grief and despair's arising** (*domanass-upāyāsā sambhavanti*).

**Such is the origin of this whole mass of *dukkha*** (*evam-etassa kevalassa dukkha-kkhandhassa samudayo hoti*).

**This is called, bhikkhus (*idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave*), the Noble Truth of the Origin of *Dukkha*** (*Dukkha-Samudayaṃ Ariya-Saccam*).

This is the Dhamma as it is discovered and understood by an arahant and Buddha.<sup>45</sup>

With dependent origination, The Buddha analyses *samsāra*. His analysis begins at ignorance, and ends at *dukkha*. In other words: **Ignorance is the condition for *dukkha***. Without ignorance, no *dukkha*.<sup>46</sup>

How to destroy ignorance? Understand the Four Noble Truths. To understand the Four Noble Truths is to put an end to ignorance, which is to put an end to rebirth, which is to put an end to *dukkha*.

How to understand the Four Noble Truths? Understand first the First Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering. In fact, absolute understanding of the First Noble Truth is the same as to understand all four Noble Truths. The Buddha explains:<sup>47</sup>

**One, bhikkhus, who sees *dukkha* sees also the origin of *dukkha*, sees also the cessation of *dukkha*, sees also the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*.**

One who sees *dukkha* sees the five clinging-aggregates as they truly are. Hav-

<sup>43</sup> For an explanation of ignorance and its origin, please see below , p.105ff.

<sup>44</sup> A.III.II.ii.1 'Tith-Āyatana-Suttam' ('Sectarian Doctrines Sutta')

<sup>45</sup> For, the bodhisatta's process of discovery, and an explanation of each of the twelve factors of dependent origination, please see below four talks, p. 39ff.

<sup>46</sup> This is a general statement referring to *dukkha* in its comprehensive meaning. In its restricted sense, *dukkha* means only bodily suffering, which even a Buddha and other arahant has to suffer until her/his Parinibbāna.

<sup>47</sup> The Buddha explains in fact that having seen either of the Four Noble Truths, one has seen also the other three. (S.V.XII.iii.10 'Gavampati-Suttam' ('Gavampati Sutta'))

ing seen them as they really are means he will also have seen their origin, cessation and the path leading to their cessation: if not, he will impossibly have seen them as they truly are.

The Buddha explains this knowledge with five similes:<sup>48</sup>

- [1] Suppose, bhikkhus, that this river Ganges was carrying along a great lump of foam; a man with good eyesight were to see it (*passeyā*), were to contemplate it (*nijjhāyeyya*), were carefully to investigate it (*yoniso upaparikkheyya*); as he saw it, contemplated it, and carefully investigated it, it would appear void only (*rittak-aññeva*), appear hollow only (*tucchak-aññeva*), appear insubstantial only (*asāra-k-aññeva*). For what substance (*sāra*) could there be in a lump of foam?

So too, bhikkhus, whatever kind of matter there is, whether

- [1-3] past, future, or present (*atītā nāgata paccuppannaṃ*);  
 [4-5] internal or external (*ajjhataṃ vā bahiddhā vā*);  
 [6-7] gross or subtle (*olārikaṃ vā sukhumāṃ vā*);  
 [8-9] inferior or superior (*hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā*);  
 [10-11] far or near (*yaṃ dūre santike vā*)

a bhikkhu sees it, contemplates it, and carefully investigates it; as he sees it, contemplates it, and carefully investigates it, it appears to him void only, hollow only, insubstantial only. For what substance could there be in matter?

- [2] Suppose, bhikkhus, that in the autumn, when it is raining and big rain drops are falling, a water bubble arises and bursts on the surface of the water: a man with good eyesight were to see it...it would appear insubstantial only.... For what substance could there be in a water bubble?

So too, bhikkhus, whatever kind of sensation there is, whether past, future or present... a bhikkhu sees it... it appears to him... insubstantial only.... For what substance could there be in sensation?

- [3] Suppose, bhikkhus, that in the last month of the hot season, at high noon, a shimmering mirage appears: a man with good eyesight were to see it...it would appear insubstantial only.... For what substance could there be in a mirage?

So too, bhikkhus, whatever kind of perception there is, whether past, future or present... a bhikkhu sees it... it appears to him... insubstantial only.... For what substance could there be in perception?

- [4] Suppose, bhikkhus, that a man needing heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood, would take a sharp axe and enter a forest. There, he would see the trunk of a large banana tree, straight, fresh, without a fruit-core. He would cut it down at the root, cut off the crown, and unroll the coil. As he unrolled the coil, he would find not even sapwood, let alone heartwood: a man with good eyesight were to see it...it would appear insubstantial only.... For what substance could there be in the trunk of a banana tree?

So too, bhikkhus, whatever kind of formations there are, whether past, future or present... a bhikkhu sees them... they appear to him... insubstantial only.... For what substance could there be in formations?

- [5] Suppose, bhikkhus, that a magician or a magician's apprentice, were to display a magical illusion at the crossroads: a man with good eyesight were to see it...it would appear insubstantial only.... For what substance could there be in a magical illusion?

So too, bhikkhus, whatever kind of consciousness there is, whether past, future or present... a bhikkhu sees it... it appears to him... insubstantial only.... For what substance could there be in consciousness?

Here, however, we must again beware of our natural stupidity. When the Buddha explains that the five aggregates are as a lump of foam, a water bubble, a mirage, a banana tree, and a magical illusion; that they are void, hollow, insubstantial, and without substance, He means that they are void of permanence,

<sup>48</sup> S.III.II.v.3 'Pheṇa-Piṇḍ-Ūpama-Suttaṃ' ('Lump-of-Foam Simile Sutta')

which means (as we discussed earlier) they are void of happiness, and void of self. The Buddha explains:<sup>49</sup>

**Matter that is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change: this the wise in the world agree upon as not existing, and I too say that it does not exist.**

**Sensation.... perception.... formations.... Consciousness that is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change: this the wise in the world agree upon as not existing, and I too say that it does not exist.**

The Buddha does not, however, mean that the five aggregates are void of true existence; He does not mean that all is merely an illusion. The five aggregates do most certainly and undeniably possess true existence. To think that all is merely an illusion is to labour under a most serious delusion. Likewise, to think that all does in fact exist is also to labour under a most serious delusion. These two extremes are wrong view of the highest order, for they both deny the reality of dependent origination.<sup>50</sup>

The Buddha explains it very clearly:

**Matter that is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change: this the wise in the world agree upon as existing, and I too say that it exists.**

**Sensation.... Perception.... Formations.... Consciousness that is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change: this the wise in the world agree upon as existing, and I too say that it exists.**

Formed existence is the existence of the aggregates: for us human beings, it is the five aggregates. There being the five aggregates, there is *dukkha*: it is impossible for the five aggregates to exist independently of *dukkha*. In the same way as it is impossible for a flame to exist independently of light.

Thus, if someone comes and says: ‘Bhante, I have so many problems. Please advise’, what is the answer?

The only true answer according to the True Dhamma (*Sa-Ddhamma*) is:

‘Your problems you have because you possess the five aggregates, because you have been reborn. Your problems will stop only when you put down the five aggregates, when you stop getting reborn. That is the First Noble Truth, the Second Noble Truth, the Third Noble Truth and the Fourth Noble Truth in a nutshell. That is the teaching of all Buddhas: nothing more and nothing less. All Buddhas advise you to put down the five aggregates, to stop getting reborn, which you can only do by becoming an arahant, so what advice do you expect? That you pursue coming-into-existence and rebirth?’

The Buddha never advises anyone to pursue coming-into-existence of the five aggregates and rebirth for any whatsoever reason: on the contrary:

**The five aggregates are truly burdens** (*bhāra have pañca-kkhandhā*),

**The burden-carrier is the person** (*bhāra-hāro ca puggalo*).

**Picking up the burden is suffering in the world** (*bhāra-ādānaṃ dukkhaṃ loke*);

**Putting down the burden is blissful** (*bhāra-nikkhepanaṃ sukhaṃ*).

We may say picking up the burden is picking up so many problems, for it is picking up *dukkha*, which is picking up rebirth, clinging to the five aggregates as permanence, happiness and self. With arahantship, the five aggregates are no

<sup>49</sup> S.III.II.v.2 ‘*Puppha-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Flower Sutta’)

<sup>50</sup> The Buddha denies these two extremes, and affirms the Middle Way of dependent origination. (S.II.I.ii.5 ‘*Kaccāna-Gotta-Suttaṃ*’ (The Buddha is here speaking to the Venerable Kaccāna-Gotta)) Please see quotation and analysis below, p.255.



longer clung to, although the arahant will (so long as he is alive) have to go on lugging many old problems around: lugging around the five aggregates formed by past kamma, in his unenlightened past. These old problems are what The Buddha calls old kamma (*purāṇa kamma*):<sup>51</sup> they do not disappear with arahantship. The Buddha explains it when He explains the two kinds of Nibbāna attainment:<sup>52</sup>

**These two, bhikkhus, are the Nibbāna element (*Nibbāna dhātu*). What two?**

[1] **The Nibbāna element with basis (*sa-upādisesā ca Nibbāna dhātu*), and**

[2] **the Nibbāna element without basis (*an-upādisesā ca Nibbāna dhātu*).**

The Buddha explains the first kind of Nibbāna:

[1] **Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is an arahant...**

**In him, still founded are the five faculties (*tiṭṭhanteva pañc-indriyāni*)<sup>53</sup> through which... he experiences sensations pleasant and unpleasant, [and] undergoes pleasure and pain.**

**In him, the end of lust, hatred and delusion, bhikkhus, is called 'Nibbāna element with basis....'**

This is very straightforward. The five aggregates that form what we conventionally call a person do not at arahantship explode into nothing: only ignorance, formation, craving, clinging, and coming-into-existence are exploded. Unless one dies just at the same time as one attains arahantship,<sup>54</sup> the basis continues to operate maybe for many years: that is, consciousness, mind-matter, the six bases, contact and sensation. The Buddha's such basis continued to operate for forty-five years: that is why we have the large corpus of Texts called the *Ti-piṭaka*.

An arahant still has eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body, and he continues to experience sensations through them: pleasant, unpleasant and neutral sensations. The only thing is that because he has eradicated ignorance, his five aggregates are without the three taints,<sup>55</sup> the sensations that arise no longer function as the condition for craving: there is no formation (*saṅkhāra*) of new kamma (*nava kamma*).<sup>56</sup> The arahant still has many problems (although not as many as be-

<sup>51</sup> The Buddha explains: 'And what, bhikkhus, is old kamma? The eye is old kamma ... to be experienced. The ear... nose... tongue... body... mind.... This is called old kamma.' Discussed also below, p.100f.

<sup>52</sup> Iti.ii.8 '*Nibbāna-Dhatu-Suttaṃ*' ('Nibbāna Element Sutta')

<sup>53</sup> These are the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body: five of the six bases.

<sup>54</sup> The Buddha explains such a case: '... not first (*a-pubbaṃ*), not last (*a-carimaṃ*), is taints' ending or life's ending....' (A.VII.ii.6, 7, 8 '*Aniccā... Dukkha... Anattā-Nupassī-Suttaṃ*' ('Impermanence... Suffering... Non-Self Reflection Sutta'))

<sup>55</sup> THREE TAINTS: please see above, p.30.

<sup>56</sup> The Buddha explains: 'But when a bhikkhu has abandoned ignorance and aroused true knowledge... he does not perform a meritorious formation (*puññ-ābhi-saṅkhāraṃ*), or a demeritorious formation (*a-puññ-ābhi-saṅkhāraṃ*), or an imperturbable formation (*āneñj-ābhi-saṅkhāraṃ*)... When there are utterly no formations, with the cessation of formations, would consciousness be discerned?' ('No, Venerable Sir.') 'When there is utterly no consciousness... no mind-matter... no six bases... no birth, with the cessation of birth, would ageing&death be discerned?' ('No, Venerable Sir.') (S.II.I.vi.1 '*Pari-Vīmaṃsana-Suttaṃ*' ('Thorough Investigation Sutta')) The imperturbable is explained below, footnote 27, p.96. For formation of kamma as the condition for consciousness, please see The Buddha's explanation and related analyses below, p.93ff.

fore), but he does not make any new problems. The Buddha explains:<sup>57</sup>

**With ignorance's remainderless fading away and cessation, formation ceases** (*avijjāya tveva asesā-virāga-nirodhā, saṅkhāra-nirodhā*).

The actual putting down of the many problems takes place only at the second kind of Nibbāna, when:<sup>58</sup> **mere bodily remains are seen.** The Buddha explains:

[2] **Here, a bhikkhu is an arahant...**

**In him, in this very life, all things that are sensed<sup>59</sup> have no delight for him: they have become cool** (*sīti bhavissanti*). **This is called 'Nibbāna element without basis.'**

This is the arahant's final Nibbāna, which we usually call his *Pari-nibbāna*. The Buddha explains this in His ultimate analysis of the cessation of coming-into-existence, dependent cessation, which is the Third Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (the cessation of problems):<sup>60</sup>

**And what, bhikkhus** (*katamañca, bhikkhave*), **is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering** (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccaṃ*)?

- ☉ **With ignorance's remainderless fading away and cessation** (*avijjāya tveva asesā-virāga-nirodhā*), **formation ceases** (*saṅkhāra-nirodhā*);
- ☉ **with formation's cessation, consciousness ceases** (*saṅkhāra-nirodhā, viññāṇa-nirodhā*);
- ☉ **with consciousness's cessation, mind-matter ceases** (*viññāṇa-nirodhā, nāma-rūpa-nirodhā*);
- ☉ **with mind-matter's cessation, the six bases cease** (*nāma-rūpa-nirodhā, saḷ-āyatana-nirodhā*);
- ☉ **with the six bases' cessation, contact ceases** (*saḷ-āyatana-nirodhā, phassa-nirodhā*);
- ☉ **with contact's cessation, sensation ceases** (*phassa-nirodhā, vedanā-nirodhā*);
- ☉ **with sensation's cessation, craving ceases** (*vedanā-nirodhā, taṇhā-nirodhā*);
- ☉ **with craving's cessation, clinging ceases** (*taṇhā-nirodhā, upādāna-nirodhā*);
- ☉ **with clinging's cessation, coming-into-existence ceases** (*upādāna-nirodhā, bhava-nirodhā*);
- ☉ **with the cessation of coming-into-existence, birth ceases** (*bhava-nirodhā, jāti-nirodhā*);
- ☉ **with birth's cessation** (*jāti-nirodhā*), **ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation** (*jarā-maraṇam, soka-parideva-*), **pain, grief and despair cease** (*dukkha-domanass-upāyāsā nirujjihanti*).

**Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering** (*evametassa kevalassa dukkhak-khandhassa nirodho hoti*).

**This is called, bhikkhus** (*idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave*), **the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering** (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccaṃ*).

The cessation of our many problems, ladies and gentlemen, is achieved only with the cessation of coming-into-existence: nothing more and nothing less. On that note, please allow me to close with one of The Buddha's very seldom quoted verdicts on coming-into-existence:<sup>61</sup>

**Just as, bhikkhus, even a tiny speck of excrement stinks, so do I not commend coming-into-existence even for a moment, not even for as long as a snap of the fingers.**

Why is this, The Buddha's verdict, seldom quoted? Because of clinging to the

<sup>57</sup> A.III.II.ii.1 *'Tittth-Āyatana-Suttaṃ'* ('Sectarian Doctrines Sutta')

<sup>58</sup> S.II.I.vi.1 *'Pari-Vimamsana-Suttaṃ'* ('Thorough Investigation Sutta') Here, The Buddha gives also a detailed analysis of how sensations arise in the arahant, but do not give rise to craving.

<sup>59</sup> The six external bases, including Nibbāna. Please see the six external bases explained also below, p.70ff.

<sup>60</sup> A.III.II.ii.1 *'Tittth-Āyatana-Suttaṃ'* ('Sectarian Doctrines Sutta')

<sup>61</sup> A.I.XVI.iii *'Eka-Dhamma-Pāḷi: Tatiya Vaggo'* ('One Thing Text: Third Chapter')

five aggregates, clinging to ignorance, clinging to *dukkha*: not understanding the First Noble Truth; not being a fine thoroughbred.

Thank you.

## IS THERE LIFE ON MARS?

Today's talk is the first of four on the origin of birth, ageing&death, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*Dukkha-Samudayaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ*), which is the Second Noble Truth: dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*).

First, let us look at the thoughts that arose in The Buddha upon His enlightenment. The Buddha explains:<sup>1</sup>

**I considered thus: 'This Dhamma that I have attained is profound, difficult to see, and difficult to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise.**

**But people delight in the home,<sup>2</sup> take delight in the home, and rejoice in the home.**

**It is hard for such people to see this thing, namely this causatively<sup>3</sup> dependent origination (*ida-ppaccayatā paṭicca-samuppādo*).**

**And it is hard to see this thing, namely, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all attachments, the destruction of craving: dispassion, cessation, Nibbāna.**

**If I were to teach the Dhamma, others would not understand me, and that would be wearisome and troublesome for me.'**

And The Buddha uttered a verse:

**'Enough with teaching the Dhamma  
That even I found hard to reach,  
For it will never be perceived  
By those who live in lust and hatred.**

**Those dyed in lust, covered in darkness,  
Will never discern this abstruse Dhamma,  
Which goes against the stream (*paṭi-sota-gāmiṃ*),  
[Is] subtle, deep, and difficult to see.'**

**Considering thus, my mind inclined towards inaction,  
not towards teaching the Dhamma (*no Dhamma-desanāya*).**

The newly enlightened Buddha reflected upon the state of our minds, and decided it would be a waste of time and effort to teach the Dhamma.

Luckily, however, a wise Brahmā came down from the Brahmā realm, and asked The Buddha please to look out into the world with his Buddha Eye (*Buddha-cakkhunā*), and see that there were in fact beings who would understand the Dhamma: some more, some less. And The Buddha looked into the world with his Buddha Eye, saw that this was true, and then He declared:

***Apārutā tesam amatassa dvārā.  
Ye sotavanto pamuñcantu saddham.***

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<sup>1</sup> M.I.iii.6 '*Ariya-Pariyesanā-Suttaṃ*' ('Noble Search Sutta') (This sutta is also called '*Pāsa-Rāsi-Suttaṃ*' ('Mass of Snares Sutta'))

<sup>2</sup> The Pali is *ālaya* (PED: 'orig. roosting place, perch, i.e. abode, settling place, house.'). This word has been translated in various ways. But since the Commentary explains it in many ways as being bent upon the five strands of sensual pleasure (delight in sights, sounds, odours, flavours, and touches), it would appear that to remain close to the original meaning, and say 'home' (which one goes forth from into the holy life) would do very well: delight in the household life, domesticity, family, food, home pleasures, etc.

<sup>3</sup> The Commentary explains that causes arise only from causes, hence, it is a cycle of causes causing causes to arise.

**Opened are the doors of the Deathless:  
They escape, whoever have ears and are faithful.**

If we have ears but listen with only one ear, our faith is half-hearted, and we show our faith by insincere words. If we listen with both ears, if we are whole-hearted Buddhists, we show our faith by sincere words and sincere practice. That means we not only follow The Buddha's advice, but make also a sincere effort to understand the **abstruse Dhamma** (a sincere effort not to go with the stream), and although we may **delight in the home**, we make a sincere effort to delight in the True Dhamma, in the profound truths, the Four Noble Truths, analysed and explained by a Fully Enlightened Buddha.

Last time, we looked at birth, ageing&death, the Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukkham Ariya-Saccam*), the First Noble Truth. Now, the Noble Truth of Suffering is easy to understand, because we all know the suffering of birth, ageing, sickness and death: we are all to some degree aware of the Noble Truth of Suffering.

And when we look into the world, we can see that our life is nothing but an attempt to overcome the Noble Truth of Suffering. We work hard to make money, so we can wear decent clothes, so we can eat good food, so we can have a nice place to live in, and so we can overcome the suffering of ageing, sickness and death by going to the doctor or hospital when necessary. If we look around we see, for example, cars by which we move quickly from one place to another; the drive is nice and smooth, because scientists have invented comfortable car seats, rubber tyres, springs, and engineers have seen to it that the roads are smooth. As we drive, we see advertisements everywhere, because there are people who want us to buy the goods they sell, so they too can make money, and try to overcome suffering; and all over the world, scientists of every kind are trying to find better ways to help us overcome suffering. There are even scientists who are trying to discover which chemical element causes ageing, because they want to devise a vaccine against ageing&death, so we at sixteen can remain young and beautiful forever and ever.

All this is trying to devise the peace of Nibbāna by manipulating the material world: our body, and the matter we live in that is our physical world. We try to stop ageing, sickness and death, and we try to make sure that we see only desirable sights, hear only desirable sounds, smell only desirable odours, taste only desirable flavours, feel only desirable touches, and have only desirable sensations, perceptions, thoughts, memories, etc.

Does this approach work? Is there peace and happiness everywhere? In the world and in ourselves? No. Only a fool would say it works (which many fools do). Only a fool would say it will ever work (which even more fools do).

Modern science keeps on promising, and speaks with authority about the amazing 'improvements' that it has brought into our lives. Yet, when we look around, it is difficult to see that modern life is at all peaceful or pleasant. There are forever wars going on (big and small), between countries, within countries, between peoples, between the generations, in parliament, at home, and within ourselves. And because of modern science and government, we can never know when some megalomaniac dictator or democratically elected president unleashes destruction upon the world. It is also because of modern science that the air we breathe is polluted, the food we eat is polluted, more and more so-called incurable diseases arise, and our life is ever more controlled by

technology, ever more complicated.

Take, for example, the television, the radio, the computer, and the hand-phone. See how they disturb and control our lives. Our minds are never alone, never our own, and we never have time for reflection, because the god of technology demands adoration. Modern Man's concentration span is ever shorter, what modern Man learns in school, in universities, and from his gurus the media is ever more trivial and irrelevant, hence, modern Man's thoughts, interests and conversation are ever shallower, and also ever more inconsequential.

Why is this? Because modern Man asks all the wrong questions, and modern science is giving all the wrong answers: caught up in a vast web of technical and scientific insights that are at best trivial, at worst irrelevant.

Such questions were asked also once by a bhikkhu called Mālunkyaputta.<sup>4</sup> He demanded that The Buddha declare to him whether the world is eternal or not, whether the soul is the same as the body or not, etc. He said that unless The Buddha declared those things to him, he would disrobe. Then The Buddha told him The Buddha would never declare such things to anyone, and meanwhile that person would die. And The Buddha gave a simile:

**Suppose, Mālunkyaputta, a man were wounded by a poisonous arrow, and his friends and companions, his kinsmen and relatives, brought a surgeon to treat him.**

**And the man were to say:**

**'I will not let the surgeon pull this arrow out until I know whether the man who wounded me was an aristocrat or a Brahmin or a merchant or a worker.**

**'... until I know the name and clan of the man who wounded me.**

**'... until I know whether [he] was tall or short or of middle height.**

**'... until I know whether [he] was dark or brown or fair.**

**'... until I know whether [he] lives in such-and-such a village or town or city.**

**'... until I know whether the bow was a long-bow or a crossbow.**

**'... until I know... [etc., etc., etc.]'**

**All this would still not be known to that man, and meanwhile he would also die.**

Then The Buddha explained:

**Whether there is the view 'The world is eternal', or the view 'The world is not eternal', there is birth, there is ageing, there is death, and there are sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair, the destruction of which I prescribe here and now.**

Whether we believe the world is eternal, or do not believe so, there is still the First Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering, and the Teachings of The Buddha to help us overcome suffering.

Then The Buddha said:

**Therefore, Mālunkyaputta, remember what I have left undeclared as undeclared, and remember what I have declared as declared.**

**And what have I left undeclared?**

**'The world is eternal', have I left undeclared.**

**'The world is not eternal', have I left undeclared. [etc.].**

**Why have I left that undeclared?**

**Because it is unbeneficial, it does not belong to the fundamentals of the holy life, it does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna. That is why I have left it undeclared.**

<sup>4</sup> M.II.ii.3 *'Cūḷa-Mālunkya-Suttaṃ'* ('Small Mālunkya Sutta': Mālunkya is the name of the bhikkhu.)

In other words, The Buddha does not answer trivial or irrelevant questions. Then The Buddha said:

**And what have I declared?**

[1] 'This is suffering', have I declared.

[2] 'This is the origin of suffering', have I declared.

[3] 'This is the cessation of suffering', have I declared.

[4] 'This is the way to the cessation of suffering', have I declared.

**Why have I declared that?**

Because it is beneficial, it belongs to the fundamentals of the holy life, it leads to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna. That is why I have declared it.

The Buddha has declared the Four Noble Truths. They answer questions of immeasurable consequence to our life.

The 𑀧𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀓 bhikkhu might say to The Buddha: 'I will disrobe unless the Exalted One tells me:

- 'The events at this year's meeting of the parliament of religions.  
( 'Important' conferences', with 'important' people who exchange views based on philosophy and identity, and make highfalutin declarations: the religion of religion.)
- 'This season's trendy colours.  
(Fashion: the religion of the body.)
- 'The most popular tourist sights in Bangkok.  
(Travel: the religion of sights.)
- 'The life of an anaconda in the Amazon jungle.  
(Pop science: the religion of sentiment and 'nature'.)
- 'How to prepare blueberry-pie.  
(Food and drink: the religion of flavours.)
- 'The thoughts about life of this year's top football player.  
(Pop philosophy: the idolatry of sports.)
- 'The latest presidential scandal in America.  
( 'Important' events in the world: the religion of media sensations.)
- 'This year's WHO report on Aids.  
( 'Important' statistics: the religion of health and 'science'.)
- 'The latest offer at *MacDonald's*.  
(Advertising: the religion of greed.)
- 'This week's Top Twenty.  
(Entertainment: the religion of sentiment and sound.)
- 'Who are the ten top seeds for Wimbledon.  
( 'Important' statistics: the religion of sports and science.)
- 'And is there life on Mars.'  
( 'Important' facts about the universe: the religion of 'science'.)

'Is there life on Mars?' sums up the essence of the much acclaimed 'Age of Information': the darkest age in history. These are the kinds of question answered by the newspapers, radio, and TV that we worship. We think spending our precious human life asking such futile questions will bring us happiness and wisdom. And meanwhile our blind rushing on and running about in *samsāra* continues: now as devas, now as human beings, now as ghosts or animals, or in

one of the hells, etc.

How to open our eyes? By first understanding (daring to understand) that there is suffering: the First Noble Truth. Next, we need to apply our minds to an analysis of why there is suffering: we need to ask questions of consequence.

Questions of consequence were asked by the bodhisatta, as he sat under the Bodhi Tree. First, The Buddha explains:<sup>5</sup>

**Before my enlightenment, bhikkhus, while I was still a bodhisatta (not yet fully enlightened), it occurred to me: ‘Alas, people have fallen into trouble, in that they are born, age and die; they pass away and are reborn, yet they do not understand the escape from that suffering [which is forerun by] ageing&death (jarā-maraṇa).**

The bodhisatta realized that there is suffering, with the forerunners ageing&death. However perfect our life, in whatever realm, there will always be ageing and death: they are the chief sources of suffering.

The Buddha explains ageing&death:<sup>6</sup>

**And what, bhikkhus, is ageing&death?**

**The ageing of various beings in the various orders of beings, their growing old, brokenness of teeth, greyness of hair, wrinkling of skin, decline of vitality, degeneration of the faculties: this is called ageing.<sup>7</sup>**

**The passing-away of the various beings from the various orders of beings, their perishing, break-up, disappearance, mortality, death, completion of time, the break-up of the aggregates, the laying down of the carcass,<sup>8</sup> the cutting off of the life faculty:<sup>9</sup> this is called death.<sup>10</sup>**

And then he realized that to overcome suffering, he needed to ask not foolish questions: he needed to ask questions of consequence. (Just as only banana trees yield bananas, so do only questions of consequence yield answers of consequence.)

The bodhisatta’s first question was:

**‘With what, is there ageing&death? What is the condition for ageing&death?’**

And The Buddha explains further:

**Then, bhikkhus, there was wise attention (yoniso manasikāra), and by wisdom the realization (paññāya abhi-samayo):**

**‘With birth, ageing&death is; birth is the condition for ageing&death (jarā-maraṇam):’**

This is birth as a human being,<sup>11</sup> deva, ghost, animal, etc., and the coming-

<sup>5</sup> S.II.I.i.10 ‘*Gotama-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Gotama Sutta’)

<sup>6</sup> D.II.9 ‘*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta’) Also in, for example, S.II.I.i.2 ‘*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Analysis Sutta’), and M.I.i.9 ‘*Sammā-Diṭṭhi-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Right View Sutta’)

<sup>7</sup> Please see also description of ageing above, p.22.

<sup>8</sup> Please see also description of carcasses above, p.22

<sup>9</sup> The Commentary explains that ‘the passing-away of beings, from the various orders of beings, their perishing, break-up, disappearance, mortality, death, completion of time’ is death explained according to worldly convention (*loka-sammutiyā*), whereas ‘break-up of the aggregates’ is according to ultimate reality (*param-attha*). For this distinction in The Buddha’s Teachings, please see also above, footnote 17, p.26.

<sup>10</sup> In a local publication, *The Heart of The Buddha’s Teaching* (p.22), an Ajahn Brahmavamsa puts it in plain terms: ‘It means the death that you call an undertaker to settle.’ (*INWARD PATH*, Penang, Malaysia)

<sup>11</sup> Please see also description of birth above, p. 22.



into-existence of the aggregates and bases: in our case, the five aggregates (matter (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations (*saṅkhārā*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*)), and our six bases (eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind base).<sup>12</sup>

This is very straightforward: for a flower to wither and die, there needs first have been a bud; for us to suffer ageing&death, we need first to have been re-born. Even the ageing&death of an ant requires that the ant is first reborn.

The bodhisatta's second question was:

**'With what, is there birth? What is the condition for birth?'**

And he realized:

**'With coming-into-existence (*bhava*),<sup>13</sup> there is birth; coming-into-existence is the condition for birth (*bhava-paccayā jāti*).'**

And The Buddha explains:<sup>14</sup>

**There are these three kinds of coming-into-existence:**

- [1] **sensual coming-into-existence** (*kāma bhavo*),
- [2] **fine-material coming-into-existence** (*rūpa bhavo*),
- [3] **immaterial coming-into-existence** (*arūpa bhavo*).

Before discussing these three kinds of coming-into-existence,<sup>15</sup> however, we shall discuss what The Buddha calls the five destinations (*gatiyo*). The Buddha explains them to the Venerable Sāriputta:<sup>16</sup>

**There are, Sāriputta, these five destinations. What five?**

**Hell** (*nirayo*), **the animal realm** (*tiracchāna-yoni*), **the ghost realm** (*petti-visayo*), **human beings** (*manussā*), **devas** (*devā*).

Our rushing on in *saṃsāra* is nothing other than running about between these five destinations: the universe comprises nothing more.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Analysis derived from The Buddha's analysis in D.II.9 '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta'), quoted above, p.26. (Also in, for example, S.II.I.2 '*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Analysis Sutta', and M.I.9 '*Sammā-Diṭṭhi-Suttaṃ*' ('Right View Sutta')) Further details by The Buddha are given in quotation below, p.101.

<sup>13</sup> COMING-INTO-EXISTENCE: 'Buddhist English' has usually either 'existence' or 'becoming'. According to British English usage, existence (= existence fact, state, mode, of existing, being or living, have being (POD & CTCD)) does not convey the meaning of process that is *bhava*. PTS (*Dialogues of The Buddha* II, p.53) says: 'the mobile, plastic, evolutionary thing, ever in progress, that life appears as conceived by the Indian, fits ill the more rigid Western metaphysic of Being.' 'Becoming' does convey the appropriate meaning, but is unidiomatic, and therefore less intelligible to the uninitiated. While 'coming-into-existence' is not very elegant, it both conveys the appropriate meaning and is idiomatic. *Vibhāva taṅhā* (below), customarily translated as 'craving for non-existence/non-becoming', has then become 'craving to go out of existence'. It is difficult to be dogmatic in such matters.

<sup>14</sup> S.II.I.2 '*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Analysis Sutta')

<sup>15</sup> The analysis that follows is partly derived from Vis.xvii '*Paññā-Bhūmi-Niddesa*' ('Wisdom-Soil Description') PoP.249ff ('Becoming')

<sup>16</sup> M.I.II.2 '*Mahā-Sīha-Nāda-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Lion's Roar Sutta')

<sup>17</sup> In many suttas are mentioned a sixth destination, the so-called *asuras*, who are often at war with the devas led by Sakka: for example, in M.I.iv.7 '*Cūḷa-Taṅhā-Sankhaya-Suttaṃ*' ('Small Craving Destruction Sutta'). In A.III.I.iv.7 '*Catu-Mahā-Rāja-Suttaṃ*' ('Four Great Kings Sutta'), The Buddha explains that when few pay respect to their elders and betters, and few regularly ob-

From another aspect,<sup>18</sup> The Buddha divides these five destinations into three kinds of coming-into-existence.<sup>19</sup>

- 1) **Sensual coming-into-existence** (*kāma-bhava*): this The Buddha calls also the sensual element (*kāma-dhātu*)<sup>20</sup>: we will for clarity's sake refer to it as the sensual realm. It is coming-into-existence of five worlds: the worlds of the hells, animals, ghosts, human beings, and devas of the six lowest deva worlds. The sensual realm has as chief characteristic sensual desire (*kāma-rāga*), which is why it is called the sensual sphere (*kām-āvacara*), the sphere of the six bases (eye/sights, ear/sounds, nose/odours, tongue/flavours, body/touches, mind/other things),<sup>21</sup> and five cords of sensuality (the five material senses and their objects). It is coming-into-existence of the five aggregates (*pañca-vokāra-bhava*): matter (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations (*saṅkhārā*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*).<sup>22</sup>
- 2) **Fine-material coming-into-existence** (*rūpa bhavo*): this The Buddha calls also the fine-material element (*rūpa-dhātu*): we will for clarity's sake refer to it as the fine-material realm. It is the four deva worlds above the sensual sphere, corresponding to the first-, second-, third-, and fourth material jhānas:<sup>23</sup> they are also known as the Brahmā worlds. The fine-material realm has as chief characteristic the absence of sensuality, and presence of only very subtle matter, which is why it is called the fine-material sphere (*rūp-āvacara*), the sphere of only three bases (eye/sights, ear/sounds, mind/other things). It is also coming-into-existence of the five aggregates, although there is also a fine-material coming-into-existence that is a coming-into-existence of one aggregate (*eka-vokāra-bhava*), the aggregate of matter (*rūpa*): these beings the Buddha calls impercipient beings (*asañña-sattā*).<sup>24</sup>
- 3) **Immaterial coming-into-existence** (*arūpa bhavo*): this The Buddha calls also the immaterial element (*arūpa-dhātu*): we will for clarity's sake refer to it as the immaterial realm. It is the four deva worlds above the fine material realm, corresponding to the first-, second-, third- and fourth immaterial jhānas. The immaterial realm has as chief characteristic the absence of matter,

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serve the Uposatha, the number of asuras increases and devas decreases.

<sup>18</sup> This is not yet the aspect under discussion: it will become clear as this explanation progresses.

<sup>19</sup> Analysis derived from Vis.VII 'Cha Anussati Niddeso' ('Six Recollections Explanation') PoP.8ff.

<sup>20</sup> Please see extended quotation below, p.285.

<sup>21</sup> SIX BASES: discussed below, p.70ff.

<sup>22</sup> FIVE AGGREGATES: discussed above, p.26ff.

<sup>23</sup> The jhānas are states of higher concentration, not unique to The Buddha's Teaching. In M.I.iii.6 'Ariya-Pariyesanā-Suttaṃ' ('Noble Search Sutta'), The Buddha explains how He as the bodhisatta learned the third and fourth immaterial jhānas (which require that one has gone through the preceding four material jhānas, and the first and second immaterial jhānas beforehand) from an Ājāra Kālāma, and Uddaka Rāmaputta. In the same sutta, and with the exact same terms, The Buddha explains all eight jhānas as part of the bhikkhu's practice. Furthermore, in, for example, M.II.iii.9 'Cūḷa-Sakuludāyī-Suttaṃ' ('Small Sakuludāyīn Sutta'), it is evident that the wanderer Sakuludāyīn and his followers practised the first, second and third jhānas. Please see also below, footnote 31, p.47.

<sup>24</sup> D.i.1 'Brahma-Jāla-Suttaṃ' ('Supreme Net Sutta')

which is why it is called the immaterial sphere (*arūp-āvacara*): the sphere of only one base (the mind base). Hence, it is coming-into-existence of only the four immaterial aggregates (*catu-vokāra-bhava*): sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations (*saṅkhārā*), and consciousness (*viññāna*).

These facts about the different realms, we may all verify by (with the light of the fourth jhāna) examining beings in the realms above and below our realm.<sup>25</sup> If we develop the divine eye (*dibba-cakkhu*), of course, it is very easy to see these things.

Coming-into-existence is thus a coming-into-existence in a particular realm: it is a process of be-coming, coming to be, coming into being. But it has two aspects. The Buddha explained the two aspects, when the Venerable Ānanda asked Him please to explain coming-into-existence:<sup>26</sup>

**Venerable Sir, it is said, 'coming-into-existence (*bhavo*)**, **coming-into-existence (*bhavo*)'.**

**In what way could there be, Venerable Sir, coming-into-existence or an explanation of coming-into-existence?**

And The Buddha explained:

**[1] Sensual-realm result [not coming-into-existence] and (*kāma-dhātu-vepakkāñ-ca*), Ānanda, kamma not coming-into-existence (*kammaṃ nā-bhaviṣṣa*) would any sensual coming-into-existence be manifest (*kāma-bhavo paññāyetha*)?**

(Surely not, Venerable Sir.)

And The Buddha explained the same thing in the case of fine-material- and immaterial coming-into-existence:

**[2] Fine-material-realm result [not coming-into-existence] and (*rūpa-dhātu-vepakkāñ-ca*), Ānanda, kamma not coming-into-existence (*kammaṃ nā-bhaviṣṣa*) would any fine-material coming-into-existence be manifest (*rūpa-bhavo paññāyetha*)?**

(Surely not, Venerable Sir.)

**[3] Immaterial-realm result [not coming-into-existence] and (*arūpa-dhātu-vepakkāñ-ca*), Ānanda, kamma not coming-into-existence (*kammaṃ nā-bhaviṣṣa*) would any immaterial coming-into-existence be manifest (*arūpa-bhavo paññāyetha*)?**

(Surely not, Venerable Sir.)

In all cases, The Buddha speaks of coming-into-existence of the result and its cause, kamma-result (*kamma-vipāka*) and kamma: the passive and active aspects of kamma.<sup>27</sup> We have thus two kinds of coming-into-existence:

- 1) Kamma-result coming-into-existence in the appropriate realm: the resultant workings of kamma, the passive coming-into-existence, birth there.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> To know and see the five aggregates as they really are, of course, the aggregates of the different kinds of coming-into-existence need to be known and seen by the meditator. Please see, for example, The Buddha's extended explanation below, p. 285.

<sup>26</sup> A.III.II.iii.6 'Paṭhama-Bhava-Suttaṃ' ('First Coming-into-existence Sutta')

<sup>27</sup> For kamma and its result as rebirth in one of the five worlds, please see also The Buddha's explanation below, p.98. For when the kamma may ripen, please see The Buddha's explanation below, p.98.

<sup>28</sup> The coming-into-existence of kamma-result is in fact birth and all subsequent kamma-resultant mental and material formations that take place in that one life, until there is a new coming-into-existence of birth as the beginning of the next life. The author considered it too early yet to men-

- 2) Kamma coming-into-existence: the causal workings of kamma, the active bringing-into-existence, the cause for birth there.<sup>29</sup>

Let us then see how this works in the case of each of the three kinds of result and cause.

- 1) **Sensual realm result** (*kāma-dhātu-vepakka*): as just explained, the sensual realm is sensual coming-into-existence, which is the human world, the woeful states, and the lower deva worlds. The sensual realm result is then the passive yielding of *kamma-vipāka* as sensual coming-into-existence, birth in those worlds. The active bringing-into-existence of kamma that is the cause for birth there is either unwholesome kamma (bad conduct such as killing, stealing, lying, and having wrong view), by which we come into sensual existence, are born as ghosts, animals or beings in hell, or wholesome kamma, (good conduct such as observing the five precepts,<sup>30</sup> the eightfold Uposatha, giving *dāna*, and having right view), by which we come into sensual existence, are born as devas in one of the six deva worlds, or are born as human beings in good circumstances.
- 2) **Fine-material realm result** (*rūpa-dhātu-vepakka*): as explained earlier, the fine-material realm is fine-material coming-into-existence, which is the four deva worlds above the sensual worlds, which correspond to the four fine-material jhānas. The fine-material realm result is then the passive yielding of *kamma-vipāka* as fine-material coming-into-existence, birth in those fine-material worlds. The active bringing-into-existence of kamma that is the cause for birth there is the practice of, for example, loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), or mindfulness-of-breathing (*ānāpāna-sati*) up to jhāna.<sup>31</sup> Exactly where in those four deva worlds one comes into existence (is born) depends on which fine-material jhāna one possessed at death, and how well developed it was.
- 3) **Immaterial realm result** (*arūpa-dhātu-vepakkañ-ca*) the immaterial realm is immaterial coming-into-existence, which is the four deva worlds above the fine-material worlds, which correspond to the four immaterial jhānas. The im-

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tion. For details, please see below, Table 5, p.114

<sup>29</sup> 'Becoming [coming-into-existence] has the characteristic of being kamma and kamma-result. Its function is to make become and become.' Vis.xvii 'Paññā-Bhūmi-Niddesa' ('Wisdom-Soil Description': 'Brief Exposition') PoP.51

<sup>30</sup> For morality (*sīla*) as a condition for rebirth in the deva-world, please see The Buddha's explanation below, footnote 69, p.55.

<sup>31</sup> Discussing the practice of jhāna outside a Buddha's dispensation, during the time of a King Makhādeva, The Buddha explains the king's practice at the end of his reign: 'He was a righteous king who ruled by the Dhamma, a great king who was established in the Dhamma. He conducted himself by the Dhamma among Brahmins and householders, among townspeople and country-folk, and he observed the Uposatha days on the fourteenth, fifteenth, and eighth of the fortnight [and after eighty-four thousand years] he led the holy life.... By developing the four divine abidings [jhāna of lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity]... he passed on to the Brahma world.... But that kind of good practice does not lead to... Nibbāna, but only to rebirth in the Brahmā world [there is no rebirth in the Brahmā world without jhāna].' (M.II.iv.3 'Makhādeva-Suttaṃ') The Buddha then explains that He was Himself that king in a past life. Please see also e.g. M.II.v.9 'Subha-Suttaṃ' (Subha is the name of The Buddha's interlocutor.), and Vis.xvii 'Conclusion', and above footnote 23, p.45.

material realm result is then the passive yielding of *kamma-vipāka* as immaterial coming-into-existence, birth in those immaterial worlds. The active bringing-into-existence of kamma that is the cause for birth there is the practice of the four immaterial jhānas. Exactly where in those four immaterial worlds one comes into existence (is born) depends on which immaterial jhāna one possessed at death, and how well developed it was.<sup>32</sup>

According to the Texts coming-into-existence has thus a twofold aspect:<sup>33</sup>

- 1) The resultant coming-into-existence is the foundation of consciousness in the appropriate realm:<sup>34</sup> rebirth coming-into-existence (*upapatti-bhava*).
- 2) The causal coming-into-existence is the performance of kamma, driven by ignorance and craving: kamma coming-into-existence (*kamma-bhava*).

The Buddha then analyses the resultant and causal workings of coming-into-existence:

**In this way, Ānanda, kamma is the field (*kammaṃ khettaṃ*), consciousness is the seed (*viññāṇaṃ bijaṃ*), craving the moisture (*taṇhā sneha*).**

**For beings (hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving)**

[1] **in the inferior realms [sensual] (*hīnāya dhātuyā*) consciousness is founded (*viññāṇaṃ pa-tiṭṭhitaṃ*)...**

[2] **in the middle realms [fine-material] (*majjhimāya dhātuyā*) consciousness is founded...**

[3] **in the superior realms [immaterial] (*paññāya dhātuyā*) consciousness is founded.<sup>35</sup>**

**Thus in the future (*evaṃ āyatim*), there is further coming-into-existence of rebirth (*puna-bbhav-ābhi-nibbatti hoti*).<sup>36</sup>**

Coming-into-existence of kamma is the planting of the seed of consciousness in the field of kamma, in a particular realm. The fruits that are yielded from that seed are further resultant coming-into-existence of the rebirth consciousness. The moisture by which the seed comes to growth, by which consciousness performs kamma and is able to bear fruit, is craving. We may say the moisture is craving for more fruits and seeds: craving for continued coming-into-existence of birth in inferior (sensual) realms, middle (fine-material) realms, and superior

<sup>32</sup> Please see also below footnote 36, p.88, and e.g. M.III.i.6 '*Āneñjasappāya-Suttaṃ*' ('To the Imperturbable Sutta'), and Vis.xvii 'Conclusion'.

<sup>33</sup> Please see, for example, Vis.vii '*Cha-Anussati-Niddesa*' ('Six Recollections Description') PoP.16ff.

<sup>34</sup> Consciousness can in the human realm not be founded alone, but is the foundation of consciousness together with mind-matter, the six bases, contact, and sensation. Please see below, 'Is and Appears Profound', p.79ff.

<sup>35</sup> Thus The Buddha excludes the impercipient beings (mentioned above under fine-material coming-into-existence p.46) from this analysis: they are the exception, not the rule.

<sup>36</sup> In S.II.I.vii.4 '*Atthi-Rāga-Suttaṃ*' ('There-Is-Lust Sutta'), The Buddha explains this procedure is some further detail, using 'formations (*saṅkhārā*)' to mean kamma: 'Wherever the founded consciousness's increase (*patiṭṭhitaṃ viññāṇaṃ virūḷhaṃ*), there is there mind-matter's descent (*nāma-rūpassa avakkanti*). Wherever there is mind-matter's descent, there is there the formations' growth (*saṅkhārānaṃ vuddhi*). Wherever there is the formations' growth, there is there future (*āyatim*), further coming-into-existence of rebirth (*puna-bbhav-ābhi-nibbatti*). Wherever there is future, further coming-into-existence, there is there future birth, ageing and death.' The Buddha explains: 'It is kamma that distinguishes beings as inferior and superior.' (M.III.iv.5 '*Cūḷa-Kamma-Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Small Kamma Analysis Sutta'))

(immaterial) realms.<sup>37</sup>

If we look at it from life to life, it follows that the resultant coming-into-existence of the rebirth consciousness in one life takes place owing to the causal coming-into-existence of kamma in a past life. And so long as there is ignorance and craving, so long will the resultant coming-into-existence of the rebirth consciousness in one life give rise to new causal coming-into-existence of kamma, which will give rise to new resultant coming-into-existence of the rebirth consciousness in a future life: thus we proceed from past life to present life to future life, on and on and on.<sup>38</sup>

ONE LIFE ►►	NEXT LIFE ►►		NEXT LIFE ►►
causal coming-into-existence	Resultant coming-into-existence	causal coming-into-existence	resultant coming-into-existence
kamma ►►	kamma-result	kamma ►►	kamma-result
For beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving, kamma is the field, consciousness is the seed.	Thus in the future, there is further coming-into-existence of rebirth.	For beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving, kamma is the field, consciousness is the seed.	Thus in the future, there is further coming-into-existence of rebirth.
PAST LIFE ►►	PRESENT LIFE ►►		FUTURE LIFE ►►

So long as there is kamma coming-into-existence, so long is there birth. Hence, the bodhisatta understood:

**'Coming-into-existence is the condition for birth (*bhava-paccayā jāti*):'**

Then, the bodhisatta asked a third question:

**'With what, is there existence? What is the condition for existence?'**

And he realized:

<sup>37</sup> The Buddha explains: 'Just as seeds that are ... capable of sprouting, and well embedded in a good field, planted in properly prepared soil: if the sky rain down steadily, those seeds come to growth, increase, abundance. Even so, bhikkhus, whatsoever kamma is done in lust, born of lust, caused by lust, arising from lust... hatred... delusion... one experiences the fruit thereof, as a thing apparent even [in this life], or upon rebirth [in the next life], or upon a subsequent occasion [in a life subsequent to that].' (A.III.I.iv.4 '*Nidāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Conditions Sutta')) In A.X.III.i.4 '*Bīja-Suttaṃ*' ('Seed Sutta'), He explains that just as a bad seed fruits with a bad taste, so does body-, speech-, and mind-kamma performed with wrong view, and also any such volitions, determinations, aspirations and formations (*saṅkhārā*) lead to harm and suffering. But a good seed fruits with a good taste, just as kamma, etc. with Right View leads to happiness. Please see also The Buddha's explanation S.III.I.II.i.2 '*Bīja-Suttaṃ*' ('Seed Sutta'), and His explanation of the result of formation (*saṅkhāra*) below p.95, being the heritage of kamma, p.96. The *Visuddhi-Magga* explains also: 'Just as it is simply owing to the arising of tree fruits, which are part of the phenomena called a tree, that it is said 'The tree fruits', or 'the tree has fruited', so it is simply owing to the arising of the fruit consisting of the pleasure and pain called experience, which is one part of the aggregates called 'devas' and 'human beings', that it is said 'a deva or a human being experiences or feels pleasure or pain.' (Vis.xvii '*Paññā-Bhūmi-Niddesa*' ('Wisdom-Soil Description') PoP.170.)

<sup>38</sup> For this ongoing process of causal and resultant coming-into-existence from life to life, please see also below, Table 3, p.98, and Table 5, p.114.

**'With clinging (*upādāne*), there is existence; clinging is the condition for existence.'**<sup>39</sup>

And The Buddha explains:<sup>40</sup>

**There are these four kinds of clinging:**

- [1] **sensual clinging** (*kām-upādānaṃ*),
- [2] **views clinging** (*diṭṭh-upādānaṃ*),
- [3] **rule&rite clinging** (*śīlabbat-upādānaṃ*),<sup>41</sup>
- [4] **self-belief clinging** (*atta-vād-upādānaṃ*).

The first cause of clinging is wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*),<sup>42</sup> namely, the belief in self,<sup>43</sup> also called identity view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*).

Once, a bhikkhu asked The Buddha how there is identity view. The Buddha explained:<sup>44</sup>

**Here, bhikkhu, an ignorant, common person** (*assutavā puthujjano*),

- **who has no regard for noble ones, and is in the noble Dhamma unskilled** (*ariya Dhammassa akovido*), **and in the noble Dhamma untrained** (*ariya Dhamme avinīto*),
- **who does not see true men** (*sa-ppurisānaṃ a-dassāvī*), **and is in the true men's Dhamma unskilled** (*sa-ppurisa-Ddhammassa akovido*), **and is in the true men's Dhamma untrained** (*sa-ppurisa-Dhamme avinīto*),

- [1] **sees matter as self, or**
- [2] **sees self as having matter, or**
- [3] **sees matter as in self, or**
- [4] **sees self as in matter.**

And The Buddha explained that such an ignorant, common person sees also

<sup>39</sup> While clinging is the condition for both rebirth- and kamma coming-into-existence, it can be only kamma coming-into-existence that is the condition for birth, because birth is itself rebirth coming-into-existence: the kamma-result cannot be its own condition, for that is independent origination. The *Visuddhi-Magga* explains: 'As regards the clause "Coming-into-existence is the condition for birth"... Only kamma coming-into-existence is intended here as "coming-into-existence"; for it is that, not rebirth coming-into-existence, which is a condition for birth.' (Vis.xvii '*Paññā-Bhūmi-Niddesa*' ('Wisdom-Soil Description') PoP.270.)

<sup>40</sup> S.II.i.2 '*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Analysis Sutta')

<sup>41</sup> 'RULE: principle to which action conforms or should conform, dominant custom, canon... [POD]', which thus corresponds to *śīla*. 'RITE: religious ceremony or observance, action required in it (... *funeral rites*.); body of rites observed by a Church [faith] (*the Anglican rite*) [POD]' which thus corresponds to *vata*)

<sup>42</sup> This analysis is only general: 'Herein, order of arising of defilements is not meant literally because there is no first arising of defilements in the beginningless round of rebirths. But in a relative sense it is this: usually in a single coming-into-existence the misinterpretation of eternity and annihilation are preceded by the assumption of a self. After, that, when a man assumes that this self is eternal, rule&rite clinging arises in him for the purpose of purifying the self. And when the man assumes that it breaks up, thus disregarding the next world [next life] sensual clinging arises in him. So self-belief clinging arises first, and after that, views clinging, and rule&rite clinging or sensual clinging. This, then, is their order of arising in one coming-into-existence.' (Vis.xvii '*Paññā-Bhūmi-Niddesa*' ('Wisdom-Soil Description') PoP.244. The analyses that follow derive from PoP.239ff ('Clinging')

<sup>43</sup> The Buddha explains that others may claim to understand sensual-, views-, and rule&rite clinging, but none understand self-belief clinging: this only a Buddha understands. Hence, inevitably, their understanding is incomplete. (M.I.ii.1 '*Cūḷa-Sīha-Nāda-Suttaṃ*' ('Small Lion's Roar Sutta').

<sup>44</sup> M.III.i.9 '*Mahā-Puṇṇama-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Fullmoon-Night Sutta').

sensation, perception, formations, and consciousness in these four ways (5 x 4 = twenty views of identity), and that is why The Buddha speaks of ‘the five clinging-aggregates (*pañc-upādāna-kkhandhā*)’: the ignorant, common person clings to (identifies with) the five aggregates as self.<sup>45</sup> There is nothing else in the world with which we may identify.

We identify for example, with our body. When our body is young and healthy, we are happy, and think: ‘I am attractive and superior’, and look down on one whose body is ageing and sick: just look at the frenzy with which people do aerobics, weight-lifting, cycling and run round in circles every day. When our body is ageing or sick, we are unhappy, and think: ‘I am unattractive and inferior’, and we envy one whose body is young and healthy: this is the pride of youth, health and life.<sup>46</sup>

It is also because of identity view that men think: ‘I am a man, virile, principled and rational: superior to women’, and women think: ‘I am a woman, sensitive, flexible and intuitive: superior to men.’ Conversely, owing also to identity view, some men feel inferior to women, and some women feel inferior to men. And, of course, the most modern, militant and dogmatic identity view is when men feel equal to women, and women feel equal to men.

Modern political orthodoxy is based on the conceit of equality: egotheism.<sup>47</sup> It is the democratic view, where everyone is seen to have a self that is inherently good and right. This has then led to further democratic views: democracy of views, democracy of values, democracy of ethics, democracy of religions, democracy of truths, democracy of paths to Nibbāna, even democracy of Nibbānas.<sup>48</sup> But the democratic view is, of course, selective: only insofar as one complies with liberal, democratic orthodoxy is one viewed with the democratic eye. In other words: ‘All views are equal: politically correct views are more equal than others.’<sup>49</sup> Conceit dies hard, and has many guises.

Likewise, because of identity view, North-Americans and Europeans think their modern culture is superior, and look down on Asians, and Asians agree with them, because Asians think their own ancient culture is backward and inferior: including The Buddha’s Dhamma. Hence, owing to identity view, Asians happily worship the alien and benighted gods of democracy, free trade, consumerism, modern science, modern medicine, and modern technology, even the modern speculative views on and distortions of the Dhamma by North-American and European academics and ‘Buddhists’.

It is also because of identity view that there are bhikkhus who observe the Vi-

<sup>45</sup> For further details with regard to the five clinging-aggregates, please see above, p.26ff.

<sup>46</sup> A.III.I.iv.9 ‘*Sukhumāla-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Delicately Nurtured Sutta’)

<sup>47</sup> EGOTHEISM: deification of self (CTCD)

<sup>48</sup> For The Buddha’s explanation of these three conceits (superiority-, inferiority-, and equality conceit), please see S.III.I.v.7 ‘*Soṇa-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Soṇa Sutta’), and S.IV.I.iii.i.5 ‘*Seyyohamasmi-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Superior Am I Sutta’)

<sup>49</sup> SOME ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS: a commonly used term among literate people in Britain, which derives from the satire *Animal Farm*, by George Orwell. It is a satire on the Communist revolution in Russia, and describes how the animals on a farm overpower their wicked owner, and have as their slogan: *All animals are equal*. Then as the pigs gain more and more power, the slogan is changed to: *All animals are equal. Some animals are more equal than others*.



naya, and feel superior on that account, and there are bhikkhus who do not observe the Vinaya, and feel superior on that account. Likewise, because of identity view, the dog sees himself as superior ruler of his owner's house and yard, and the mynah bird sees himself as superior to all beings in the neighbourhood that he rules.

With identity view as condition, there is also the annihilation view (*uccheda-ditthi*), when we believe we are annihilated at death. Some of us may say we believe in rebirth, but are in fact incapable of really believing in rebirth, capable only of believing that we are annihilated at death. (This is why, for example, we do not bother to observe the eightfold Uposatha, do not bother to meditate, and do not bother to study, learn and practise the Dhamma: we think it does not really matter.) That is the materialist view, also the view of *modern science*.<sup>50</sup> It is explained by The Buddha:<sup>51</sup>

**Here a certain ascetic or Brahmin declares and holds this view:**

**'Since this self is material, is composed of the four great elements [earth, water, fire and air<sup>52</sup>], and is the product of mother and father, at the breaking-up of the body, it is annihilated and perishes, and does not exist after death.'**

Instead of a certain ascetic or Brahmin, we may now say: a certain modern physicist, chemist or biologist. They think there are many, many more than four elements, they also think our mind-and-body are merely the material product of mother and father, and they seriously think the Deathless can be attained by genetic engineering: the folly of the materialist view has, of course, no beginning.

When our view is materialist, we cling to the sensualist view that the highest happiness is gratifying our senses, which is, of course, also *modern* orthodoxy. The Buddha explains the sensualist view:<sup>53</sup>

**Here a certain ascetic or Brahmin declares and holds the view:**

**'In as far as this self, being furnished and endowed with the fivefold sense pleasures [through eye, ear, nose, tongue and body], indulges in them, that way the self realizes the highest Nibbāna here and now.'**

The sensualist view manifests as sensual clinging (*kāma-upādānaṃ*).<sup>54</sup>

The Buddha explains:<sup>55</sup>

**Both the things (*dhamme*), bhikkhus, that are clung to (*upādāniye*) I shall teach you, and the clinging (*upādānañ-ca*).**

**Listen.**

**And what, bhikkhus, are the things that can be clung to, and what is the clinging?**

- **The eye, bhikkhus, is a thing that can be clung to; the desire and lust (*chanda-rāgo*) for it is the clinging there.**
- **[the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and] the mind is a thing that can be clung to; the desire and lust for it is the clinging there.**

<sup>50</sup> Further to the annihilation/ materialist view, please see below, p.248.

<sup>51</sup> D.i.1 '*Brahma-Jāla-Suttaṃ*' ('Supreme Net Sutta')

<sup>52</sup> For the four elements, please see below, p.71.

<sup>53</sup> D.i.1 '*Brahma-Jāla-Suttaṃ*' ('Supreme Net Sutta')

<sup>54</sup> Further to the sensualist view, please see below, p.251.

<sup>55</sup> S.IV.I.III.i.7 '*Upādāniya-Suttaṃ*' ('Clung to Sutta') The Buddha explains the things that can be clung to also as the five aggregates (S.III.I.III.i.9 '*Upādāniya-Suttaṃ*' ('Clung to Sutta')).

**These are the things that are clung to, and this the clinging.<sup>56</sup>**

Our sensual clinging was why The Buddha did not at first want to teach the Dhamma, remember?<sup>57</sup>

**...people delight in the home, take delight in the home, and rejoice in the home.**

With identity view as condition, there is also conceit, with views clinging (*ditṭh-upādānam*). We cling to political views such as that although men and women are different, one must not see or think or speak of any difference, because it is undemocratic; that killing an embryo is a democratic act of compassion; that what the media-manipulated, mandate-giving majority says is good and right is *per se* good and right. We cling to the view that The Buddha was not really enlightened, and much of His Teaching does not apply to the modern age, so we need not follow His advice; we cling even to the speculative historical views<sup>58</sup> and theories of European historians and philologists;<sup>59</sup> and we take refuge in The Buddha in ourselves, the Dhamma in ourselves, and the Sangha in ourselves (The historical Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha have been conceptualized and democratized into oblivion).

With identity view as condition, there is also the eternity view (*sassata-ditṭhi*). The Buddha explains this view:<sup>60</sup>

**Here, bhikkhus, a certain ascetic or Brahmin... declares:**

**'The self and the world are eternal, produce nothing new,<sup>61</sup> like a mountain peak, set firmly as a post. These beings rush on and run about, pass away and arise again, but this remains eternally.'**

The eternal self and world are given different names, for example, soul, universal consciousness, or original mind.<sup>62</sup> To purify that eternal self, there is rule&rite clinging (*silabbat-upādānam*).<sup>63</sup>

<sup>56</sup> For the five aggregates as things that can be clung to, please see also above analysis of the five clinging-aggregates, p.29.

<sup>57</sup> M.I.iii.6 '*Ariya-Pariyesanā-Suttam*' ('Noble Search Sutta') (This sutta is also called '*Pāsa-Rāsi-Suttam*' ('Mass of Snares Sutta'))

<sup>58</sup> Here, the author mentioned that to think the accuracy of texts can be gauged by a 'scientific' analysis of 'historical facts' about them derives from the 'Father of History', the Greek Herodotus (5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.). It is a purely European view that depends on a metaphysic (*ditṭhi-gata*). Personal and national histories give rise to conceit and identity view, which may manifest as, for example, ancestor worship and nationalism. For the historical fallacy, please see also below footnote 69, p.103.

<sup>59</sup> PHILOLOGY: study of the structure and development of language, or of a particular language or language family.

<sup>60</sup> D.i.1 '*Brahma-Jāla-Suttam*' ('Supreme Net Sutta')

<sup>61</sup> The original says 'barren'.

<sup>62</sup> For further details to the eternity view, please see below, p.249ff.

<sup>63</sup> The Texts explain that 'rules and rites' refers only to the austere practices of religious orders other than The Buddha's. This would thus refer to the rules and rites of ox-duty and dog-duty ascetics, naked ascetics, fire ascetics, and include their rites of sacrifice, purification by water, etc. (Please see M.I.ii.2 '*Mahā-Sīha-Nāda-Suttam*' ('Great Lion's Roar Sutta') for The Buddha's detailed description of His own such practices as a bodhisatta, Vin.Mv.I for references to the rules and rites of fire ascetics, and D.i.2 '*Sāmañña-Phala-Suttam*' ('The Fruit of Asceticism Sutta') for the many rules and rites disallowed to bhikkhus of which many are mentioned here, since they still exist.)

Rule&rite with wrong view has many manifestations worldwide, in all religions.<sup>64</sup>

- We give and receive ‘blessings’ (for example, sprinkling with, or immersing the body in ‘holy’ water).
- We repeat magic mantras so many times.
- We tell fortunes, read signs, and practise *feng-shui*.<sup>65</sup>
- We eat only certain foods (for example, only vegetarian food<sup>66</sup>), or eat only food prepared in a certain way, or fast.
- We engage in undue worship of relic, sacred image and shrine.
- We circumambulate around them, and prostrate before them so many times, or for so long, etc.
- We invest them with magical powers, and we make and carry magical amulets, etc.

We even engage in an enormously complex rite of secret teachings and meditations, involving a host of fantastical gods, who will help purify our self, and then whisk us away to a magical land of eternal and unadulterated happiness.

And then there are also the more bizarre rites of bodily mutilation (deliberate amputation, tattooing, branding and scarring, etc.), self-torment (lying on thorns, etc.), and the even more bizarre rites of walking on embers, climbing ladders that as rungs have sharp blades, sticking sharp objects right through both cheeks, and pulling religious floats by chains that have been hooked into the flesh of the back, etc.

Most bizarre of all are, perhaps, the many rules&rites of the modern keep-fit religion (tormenting the body with excessive and mindless exercise: vital to a democratically elected president’s street-cred<sup>67</sup>), and the rites of the religion of sports (the Olympic Games, for example, resemble nothing more now than a solemn religious ceremony, observed with much gravity by the participants, the media and viewers world-wide).

Now, as The Buddha says in the *‘Kālāma-Suttaṃ’*,<sup>68</sup> we should neither cling to nor reject rule&rite because they are rule&rite; we should judge them on their own merits. Hence, there is rule&rite associated with right view, and rule&rite associated with wrong view: the difference lies in the motivation. The bhik-

<sup>64</sup> In the Dhamma, these are what The Buddha calls ‘low arts’ (*tiracchāna-vijjāya*). He mentions, for example, recital of charms and ceremonial bathing (e.g. sprinkling with ‘holy’ water). For bhikkhus, they are wrong livelihood (*micchā ājīva*), as they corrupt the faithful, being manifestations of wrong view.

<sup>65</sup> The art of arranging furniture, designing houses, etc. to ensure ease, health, etc.

<sup>66</sup> Here, the author mentioned that to think purification is achieved by food is wrong view, whereas to eat no meat because, for example, one does not like to think that an animal has been killed, etc., need not be wrong view.

<sup>67</sup> STREET-CRED: to have street-cred is to behave in such a way that is up-to-date, and which makes one acceptable to ordinary people. If the president goes through the rite of jogging every day, he will gain the respect (and votes) of those who believe in purification by physical exercise.

<sup>68</sup> A.III.II.ii.5 The popular name for this sutta is *‘Kālāma-Suttaṃ’*, although it is in the Pali called *‘Kesamutti-Suttaṃ’* (‘Kesamutti Sutta’). Here The Buddha says that traditions should not be followed because they are traditions: they should be judged according to whether they lead to good or bad.

khu's life, for example, is circumscribed by many rules and rites, which all serve to generate pure and respectful conduct of body, speech, and mind.

Rule&rite is associated with right view and wisdom when we perform a rite that has a *kusala* object and motive. For example:

- ☉ The rite of doing obeisance to The Buddha image or a bhikkhu. (Out of respect for The Buddha's memory, His wisdom, and His Teaching).
- ☉ The rite of taking the Three Refuges.
- ☉ The rite of undertaking to observe the rule of five or eight precepts, and the rule itself that is the five or eight precepts. (The rite increases our concentration and determination; the kamma of the rule brings non-remorse and safety.<sup>69</sup>)
- ☉ The rite of offering flowers and incense (or even food and water) to the Buddha image. (Out of respect for His memory, His wisdom and His Teaching.)
- ☉ The rite of reflecting on the Triple Gem (The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha: some people use a rosary, for example, to help the mind attend to The Buddha's qualities again and again.)
- ☉ The rite of soberly chanting some of His Teachings, with full knowledge of their meaning, or using chants to meditate on, for example, the impermanence of the flowers, the repulsiveness of the food, the purity of the water, etc.

But if we do these things blindly (for example, blindly repeat The Buddha's name), how can there be right view and wisdom? And there is, of course, even more wrong view, if we think we by rule&rite alone can attain Nibbāna (pass an exam or improve our business).

Equally incompatible with right view are rites that involve melodious chanting by bhikkhus, accompanied by music (blaring all night into the countryside from loudspeakers), and wild drumming, fireworks, flashing lights, dancing, acrobatics, etc.<sup>70</sup> There is nothing pious or lofty about including such sensual revelry in our worship of The Infinite Buddha, the Noble Dhamma and the Noble

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<sup>69</sup> The Buddha explains five immediate benefits that arise from keeping the precepts: 1) Through careful attention to one's affairs, one gains much wealth, 2) One gets a good reputation for morality and good conduct, 3) Whatever assembly one approaches, whether of nobles, Brahmins, householders or ascetics, one does so with confidence and assurance, 4) One dies unconfused, 5) One is reborn in a good place, a heavenly world.' (D.ii.3 '*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta'))

<sup>70</sup> The Buddha explains: '**Bhikkhus, there are these five disadvantages to one singing the Dhamma in a melodious voice. What five? 'Either he is himself carried away by the sound; or others are carried away by it; or householders grumble; or as he strives for purity of sound, there is a break in his concentration [concentrating on the sound, he forgets what comes next]; and people who follow fall into wrong view. These, bhikkhus, are the five disadvantages to one singing the Dhamma in a melodious voice. [For] whoever sings so, there is a *dukkata* offence (*āpatti dukkaṭassā*).**' The text then explains that bhikkhus were doubtful about intoning (*sarabhaññe*), upon which The Buddha said: '**Bhikkhus, I allow intoning.**' (Vin.Cv.V and A.V.V.i.9 '*Gītassara Sutta*' ('Melodious Voice Sutta')) It is also an offence against the Vinaya for bhikkhus (and the eight precepts for laypeople) to listen to or play music, and watch or do acrobatics, etc. Please see, for example, D.i.2 '*Sāmañña-Phala-Suttaṃ*' ('The Fruits of Asceticism').

Sangha. As The Buddha always said when bhikkhus failed to behave in a manner appropriate to bhikkhus:<sup>71</sup>

**How can you, useless man (*magha-purisa*) [do such a thing]?**

**It does not, useless man, inspire faith in the faithless, or increase the faith in the faithful,<sup>72</sup> but, useless man, it inspires disaffection in the faithless and doubt in some of the faithful.**

How could it? It is like a village fair, a circus, or a discoteque: the mind is caught up in the five strands of sensuality, not the Dhamma. It is a sure way to kill The Buddha *Sāsana*.

Now, while wrong view of self underlies clinging, clearly it will in most cases not be a view that we have formulated as such. This does not prevent the wrong view of self from existing, or prevent it from being clung to. For example, not many understand that modern orthodoxy is a theology of self, taking its scientific mandate from the religion of modern science (mainly modern psychology), and its mystical mandate from whichever nebulous modernized 'religious tradition' that is held to (perhaps even a 'pragmatic' compound of traditions): the faith in self is blind.

Thus, we may cling to the view of an eternal self and perform rites to purify it, without even really knowing that we are doing so. How many of us are fully aware of our views? Most of us do not have time for such things. The one church has been replaced by a host of churches; all clamouring for attention: the church of sensual consumerism clamouring the loudest. Hence, the ordinary intelligent, supposedly educated modern man and woman in the street will most often have only a vague, hazy idea about the elements of their modern orthodoxy: if the idea was in any way clear, the orthodoxy could not be sustained, for it comprises mutually exclusive views. For example, there is on the one hand the view of rationalist, empirical modern science, and on the other hand (when things become difficult or inexplicable), prayer to an eternal, mystical entity of sorts: sometimes a god, now very often something that is supposed not to be a god, but comes to the same thing. There is on the one hand highfalutin and public declarations about human rights, equality and democracy (perhaps even in the constitution), on the other hand nuclear arsenals and continued secret development of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction (for extermination of a people), and legalization of abortion (for extermination of a person), as well as imposition of compliance with those values upon such as think otherwise: by censorship (the modern media is *per se* censored according to popular values, and is by and large run by the captains of industry); by law (e.g. Political Correctness); by subterfuge (the so-called intelligence services; broadcasting of political/ religious radio/TV-programs to target audiences, as well as producing and distributing similar illegal literature); by outright military force ('liberate' the 'oppressed' people with task forces that first destroy and demolish, and then become permanent garrisons, to ensure the rebuilding program goes to the right contractors: a procedure that is part&parcel

<sup>71</sup> Please see the analyses in the *Pātimokkha* (the Rule) in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*.

<sup>72</sup> Literally: 'It is not, useless man, to the displeased [*appasannānaṃ* ~ the faithless] pleasing [*pasādāya* ~ inspiring faith], or to the pleased [*pasannānaṃ* ~ the faithful] increasing [*bhiyyobhāvāya* ~ inspiring further faith]'.

of empire-building).<sup>73</sup> It is not only confused views that are the norm, but a confusion of confused views that is the norm.

But why this insanity? That was the bodhisatta's fourth question:

**'With what, is there clinging? What is the condition for clinging?'**

And he realized:

**'With craving (*taṇhā*), there is clinging; craving is the condition for clinging (*taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṃ*).'**

Craving (*taṇhā*) is what The Buddha calls the origin of suffering, which is the Second Noble Truth. He explains:<sup>74</sup>

**The origin of suffering, as a Noble Truth, is this:**

**it is the craving (*taṇhā*) that produces further coming-into-existence (accompanied by enjoyment and lust (*nandi-rāga*)), and enjoying this and that (*tatra-tatr-ābhinandini*); in other words:**

- [1] **craving for sensual pleasure (*kāma-taṇhā*),**
- [2] **craving to come into existence (*bhava-taṇhā*),**
- [3] **craving to go out of existence (*vibhava-taṇhā*).**

And He explains that they manifest in six ways:<sup>75</sup>

**There are these six kinds of craving: sight craving (*rūpa-taṇhā*), sound craving (*sadda-taṇhā*), odour craving (*gandha-taṇhā*), flavour craving (*rasa-taṇhā*), touch craving (*phoṭṭhabba-taṇhā*), craving for other things (*dhamma-taṇhā*).**

This gives eighteen types of craving.

So, what is the difference between clinging and craving? The Texts explain:<sup>76</sup>

Craving is the aspiring to an object that one has not yet reached, like a thief's stretching his hand out in the dark; clinging is the grasping of an object that one has reached, like the thief's grasping his objective.

Sensual craving is seeking desirable objects through the six bases:

- 1) Desirable sights through the eye
- 2) Desirable sounds through the ear
- 3) Desirable odours through the nose
- 4) Desirable flavours through the tongue
- 5) Desirable touches through the body
- 6) Other desirable things, such as desirable sensations, perceptions, thoughts, ideas, memories, emotions, intentions, etc. through the mind

Hence, sensual craving is the same as sensual lust (*kāma-rāga*), and is of the first *akusala* root, greed (*lobha*).

As explained before, sensual craving is born of the identity view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) of sensualism, which is one manifestation of the identity view as the annihilation view. In this case, we believe that gratifying our senses is the highest hap-

<sup>73</sup> The manifestation of double-think and double-speak in connection with legalized abortion is discussed also below, p.61.

<sup>74</sup> S.V.XII.ii.1 '*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*' ('Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta')

<sup>75</sup> S.II.I.i.2 '*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Analysis Sutta')

<sup>76</sup> Vis.xvii '*Paññā-Bhūmi-Niddesa*' ('Wisdom-Soil Description') PoP.242

pinness, because we think the ‘self’ is annihilated at death. Hence, we<sup>77</sup> **delight in the home, take delight in the home, and rejoice in the home.** It is also the materialist view of modern science and technology, and accounts for the religion and dogmas of ‘progress’ and ‘development’.

‘Progress’ and ‘development’ are said to lead to paradise because things become ‘easier’ ... ‘quicker’. The quicker we can do things, the more money can we make, which means the more means for sensual pleasure can we acquire, and the more time for it too. Thus, we have, for example, ever more electrical gadgets to do our daily work for us (which means we become ever more dependent on resources and technology to generate electricity, which is expensive, which means we have to make ever more money). In the warmer climates, we have fans and air conditioners to cope with the heat of living and working in concrete buildings with glass windows, surrounded by electrical cables and wires. We eat masses of instant foods and drinks (quickly produced, quickly consumed, and quickly digested because almost no nutrition). We have instant communication on the phone (no time to write letters), and the e-mail (time on the Net is money, so no time for complete thinking, complete sentences, complete words, grammar, punctuation, etc.).

‘Progress’ and ‘development’ are said also to make life more pleasant: homes for the aged, hospitals for the sick, and funeral parlours for the dead, to hide the unattractive realities of ageing, sickness and death; an ever growing perfume, cosmetics, and hair-dressing industry, and also ever indecent fashions to excite lust and conceit; idle and often indecent entertainment on TV (unedifying news, fatuous soap operas, the inanity of sports, music videos, shows, etc.) which make the mind lazy and shallow, and computerized entertainment (e.g. war-games and virtual reality) which agitate the mind with lust, hatred, and immense delusion, etc.

And to look progressive and modern, we wear clothes that are either unsuitable for warmer climates (for example, synthetic materials, tie, trousers and shoes), or immodest (for example, shorts, sleeveless shirts, skimpy blouses).

To keep the mad, impatient rush for sensual pleasures going, there is also an ever growing and forceful advertising industry to excite ever more craving in us for these things, so we may buy ever more and more, so the hallowed GNP may increase,<sup>78</sup> and the electorate may have reason to re-elect the government. Nobody breathes a word about the ever-increasing confusion and suffering that is modern life: modern ‘progress’ rhymes with stress, and distress.

The epitome of ‘progress’ and ‘development’ is perhaps the discoteque. People who are (or will be) fathers and mothers (who vote and can be voted for), pay hard-earned money to spend many hours under the influence of drugs and alcohol, writhing mindlessly in a dark and crowded room with flashing lights, and music: some of it only electronically produced thumping rhythms, some of it with lyrics that excite only lust and sentimentality. And the music is so loud that the precious faculties of thought and speech become inoperative. It is a

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<sup>77</sup> M.I.iii.6 ‘*Ariya Pariyesanā-Suttam*’ (‘Noble Search Sutta’) (This sutta is also called ‘*Pāsa-Rāsi-Suttam*’ (‘Mass of Snares Sutta’))

<sup>78</sup> For the hallowing of the GNP in ancient India, please see below, footnote 26, p.250.

craving for purely material sensation (sound) and action (writhing): craving for mental darkness darker than the animal world. And the disco is also where inordinate craving for beautiful bodily sensations gave birth to the *modem* religion of mindless promiscuity, which led to the most *modem* of all diseases, Aids. It needs hardly be mentioned that such impure conduct of body, speech, and mind leads inevitably to low self-esteem, even self-hatred.<sup>79</sup>

This insanity is not only born of the identity view (*sakkāya-dīṭṭhi*), but reinforces it: governments and their mandate-giving electorate think this kind of so-called development and progress is a sign of sophistication and superiority. The boy in a sarong and sandals is comfortably, modestly, and inexpensively dressed, yet he envies the boy in high status clothes: hot, expensive, and immodest jeans, and hot, expensive basketball boots. High status too is the intelligence-draining TV, the infernal discoteque, and sitting in *MacDonald's* eating very expensive junk food.<sup>80</sup>

The second type of craving is craving to come into existence, which is also born of identity view (*sakkāya-dīṭṭhi*) albeit as the eternity view (*sassata-dīṭṭhi*). And since craving is the condition for clinging, it follows that there are three kinds of craving to come into existence:<sup>81</sup>

- 1) craving [to come into] sensual existence (*kāma-taṇhā*)
- 2) craving [to come into] fine-material existence (*rūpa-taṇhā*)
- 3) craving [to come into] immaterial existence (*arūpa-taṇhā*)

The identity view of craving to come into sensual existence (*kāma-taṇhā*) makes us think things in our human life will go on forever and ever. It is a subtle kind of craving, because if someone were to ask us, we would protest: 'Of course I don't think things will last forever and ever!' Nonetheless, because our understanding of impermanence is only conceptual, we do in fact subliminally believe that our youth, health and life is everlasting, that our parents, spouse, friends, children, etc. will go on being healthy and alive, etc. We think also our good fortune (or bad fortune) will go on, and that our settled routine in life will go on, etc. And we become lazy and complacent, which is a sure way to weaken the mind further, and then who knows what will happen, or where we will be reborn?<sup>82</sup>

The identity view of craving to come into fine-material existence (*rūpa-taṇhā*) makes us crave for what we think is eternal life in the fine-material realm of Brahmās, and craving to come into immaterial existence (*arūpa-taṇhā*) makes us crave for what we think is eternal life in the immaterial realm (where there is no matter at all). But, although the life-span in those realms is indeed immense, it ends eventually. And then who knows where we will be reborn?

Finally, there is craving to go out of existence (*vi-bhava-taṇhā*), which is also born of identity view as the annihilation view (*uccheda-dīṭṭhi*); it is also called craving

<sup>79</sup> For how to overcome low self-esteem, please see above footnote 69, p.55.

<sup>80</sup> The fundamental materialist view that is the condition for the wrong view of progress and development is discussed also below, p.248.

<sup>81</sup> D.iii.10 '*Saṅgīti-Suttaṃ*' ('Chanting Together Sutta')

<sup>82</sup> This is the conduct of the fool (*bāla*). Please see above quotation, p.22.



for cessation (*nirodha-tanhā*).<sup>83</sup> It too is the materialist view (also the modern view), where we believe that our body is our self, and that when our body dies, the self dies too. This view exists with and without faith in rebirth.

When there is craving to go out of existence without faith in rebirth, we think the self is annihilated at the end of this life. But when there is craving to go out of existence with faith in rebirth, we think the self of this life is extinguished, and the self in the next life is someone else. Both are identity view, wrong view. The Buddha explained it to a naked ascetic called Kassapa:<sup>84</sup>

**Kassapa, ‘The one who acts is the same as the one who experiences [the result]’ refers to one existing from the beginning.**

**When one asserts: ‘Suffering is created by oneself’, this amounts to eternity (*sassatam*).**

**But, Kassapa, ‘The one who acts is one, the one who experiences [the result] is another’ refers to one stricken by sensation.**

**When one asserts: ‘Suffering is created by another’, this amounts to annihilation (*ucchedam*).**

With this annihilation view, we think: ‘What does it matter what I do? The good and bad results of my kamma will be experienced by someone else, not me!’ This view is not uncommon.

The Buddha describes also an annihilation identity view<sup>85</sup>

**that arises through fear of identity (*sakkāya-bhāya*), and disgust with identity (*sakkāya-aparijeguucchā*).**

An example of the craving that arises out of this view is the time when a number of bhikkhus developed the perception of repulsiveness of the body as a meditation subject. Lacking in wisdom, they identified with their body (*sakena kāyena*), and hating its repulsiveness, they developed self-hatred, and killed themselves.<sup>86</sup> Self-hatred is very common in modern society, and is the inevitable result of an amoralist<sup>87</sup> life governed by materialism and sensualism. It manifests as, for example,

- the widespread phenomenon of low self-esteem, and worse,
- the self-destructive behaviour of bulimia and anorexia (sensual craving alternating with cessation craving: both born of seeing the body as self);
- drug and alcohol abuse (craving for mental cessation); and eventually
- suicide (thinking that to kill the body is to kill the self): (Suicide is common in ‘progressive’ and ‘progressing’ societies.)
- in the most decadent societies also euthanasia (upon request by the victim, it is the same as suicide; upon request by the family, it is plain hatred <in

<sup>83</sup> *ibid*. The commentary explains that ‘craving for cessation (*nirodha tanhā*)’ is annihilation view associated with lust (*rāga*).

<sup>84</sup> S.II.I.ii.7 ‘*Acela Kassapa-Suttam*’ (‘Naked Kassapa Sutta’)

<sup>85</sup> M.III.i.2 ‘*Pañca-Ttaya-Suttam*’ (‘Five and Three Sutta’)

<sup>86</sup> The Text says they killed themselves, killed one another, and also asked a resident layman (who pretended to be a bhikkhu) to kill them. This event led The Buddha now to teach the bhikkhus mindfulness-of-breathing, and lay down the Vinaya rule according to which the bhikkhu who kills a human being is ‘defeated’: he is no more a bhikkhu. (Vin.Pār.III (the event is described also in S.V.X.i.9 ‘*Vesālī-Suttam*’ (‘Vesali Sutta’)) Their suicide was what The Buddha calls ‘blameworthy’. Please see below endnote, p.63.

<sup>87</sup> AMORALISM: refusal to recognise the validity of any system of morality; AMORAL: non-moral, without morality. (not the same as IMMORAL, which means morally wrong or evil.)

the guise of pity>, upon the executioner's initiative, it is plain hatred too, maybe in the guise of plain pity, maybe in the guise of what we might call 'cost-effective pity': 'The taxpayers' money and the health service's time could be spent more efficiently on curable patients!' There is immense conceit involved in a doctor now having become recognized by the authorities as master over not only sickness and health, but also master over life and death: hence, he loses all sense of right and wrong.

A major problem in modern society is also the prevalence of women who have had one or more abortions: the result of uncontrolled sensual craving. Inevitably, they develop self-hatred, and to overcome this, they distort the truth to themselves.<sup>88</sup> Then, out of a militant identity view, they demand persistently that abortion is not murder, but a human right: an act of compassion. And, because modern government is democratic, something that is plain as a pike-staff<sup>89</sup> becomes yet another of the many modern 'issues' that requires much emotional debating in parliament and other forums such as the media: double-think<sup>90</sup> and doublespeak is a compulsory component of modern orthodoxy.<sup>91</sup> Eventually, of course, such self-hatred and habitual distortion of the truth leads to mental disturbance and confused and glaringly self-contradictory political views, (some born of paranoia, which is born of conceit (viz. Political Correctness)).

And why, then, does craving arise? This was the bodhisatta's fifth question, which we shall discuss in the next talk. Please allow me to close this talk by repeating the bodhisatta's four answers discussed today:

- [1] **'With birth, there is ageing&death; birth is the condition for ageing&death (*jarā-maraṇam*)!...**
- [2] **'With coming-into-existence, there is birth; coming-into-existence is the condition for birth(*bhava-paccayā jāti*)!...**
- [3] **'With clinging, there is existence; clinging is the condition for coming-into-existence(*upādāna-paccayā bhavo*)!...**
- [4] **'With craving, there is clinging; craving is the condition for clinging(*taṇhā-paccayā upādānan'ti*)!...**

Thank you.

<sup>88</sup> For a description of abortion in the Pali Texts, please see above p.24. The mental and moral confusion commonly concomitant with having had an abortion is recognized even by many doctors of modern medicine: such doctors will always recommend the pregnant party not to have an abortion.

<sup>89</sup> PLAIN AS A PIKESTAFF: perfectly plain or clear

<sup>90</sup> DOUBLETHINK: a term commonly known and used by literate people in Great Britain. It was coined by the English author George Orwell, in his futuristic novel *1984*, to describe a form of political correctness enforced by the authorities: 'Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them.'

<sup>91</sup> Here, the author explained how a North American bhikkhu once told him that a common problem at meditation retreats in North America is the abortionist who begins to develop concentration: the ugly truth that she has suppressed for many years appears suddenly undisguised before her. Inevitably, the reaction is immense distress and remorse, with a natural loss of desire to continue the practice. Unfortunately too, the remedy most often recommended is: 'Forgive yourself', which makes matters only worse, as it reinforces the identity view. The Buddha's advice on what to do about evil that one has done in the past is quite different (and unsentimental: please see S.IV.viii.8 '*Saṅkhadhama-Suttaṃ*' ('Conch Trumpeter Sutta')).

## Endnote

[ The author was on some occasions presented with the proposition that suicide (and therefore also euthanasia) is blameless. The reference for this proposition was The Buddha's stating that the suicide of a bhikkhu Channa was blameless.<sup>92</sup>

Such a reading of The Buddha's statement fails, however, to include The Buddha's qualifying statement (fails to include the immediately preceding few sentences). Failing to include this qualification, the reading cannot be but a misreading, and the conclusion drawn therefrom cannot but be a most grave misrepresentation of The Buddha. Indeed, such a reading turns The Buddha's Teachings upside down completely.

The incident is here explained, and includes the Buddha's qualifying statement.]

Once the Venerable Sāriputta and the Venerable Mahācunda visited the bhikkhu Channa, because he was very sick. The Venerable Channa told the Venerable Sāriputta that he intended **to use the knife** (*satthaṃ āharissāmi*), which means he intended to commit suicide. And he added:

**Remember this, friend Sāriputta: blamelessly** (*an-upavajjaṃ*) **the bhikkhu Channa will use the knife** (*Channo bhikkhu satthaṃ āhārisati*).

With these words, we may understand that the Venerable Channa declared arahantship.

When the Venerable Sāriputta later discussed the Venerable Channa's case with The Buddha, The Buddha explained the blameworthy suicide:<sup>93</sup>

**When one, Sāriputta,**  
**this body lays down** (*tañca kāyaṃ nikkhipati*), **and another body grasps** (*aññañca kāyaṃ upādiyati*), **that is blameworthy, I declare** (*tam-ahaṃ sa-upavajjoti vadāmi*).

And The Buddha added:

**This did not happen in the case of the bhikkhu Channa.**  
**The bhikkhu Channa used the knife blamelessly.**

The bhikkhu Channa's suicide was blameless because the bhikkhu Channa died as an arahant. Whether he was an arahant before killing himself, or attained arahantship at the time of death is neither here nor there, for he died an arahant.

Later, however, on the occasion of bhikkhus having committed blameworthy suicide, The Buddha explained how suicide should be regarded:<sup>94</sup>

**It is unbecoming** (*an-anucchavikaṃ*), **bhikkhus, of these bhikkhus, it is not seemly** (*an-anulomikaṃ*), **it is not fit** (*a-ppaṭirūpaṃ*), **it is not the ascetic's way** (*a-ssāmaṇakaṃ*), **it is not allowable** (*a-kappiyaṃ*), **it is not to be done** (*a-karaṇiyaṃ*).

**How can these bhikkhus themselves deprive themselves of life** (*attanāpi attānaṃ jīvitaṃ voropessanti*), **and deprive also one another of life** (*añña-maññaṃ-pi jīvitaṃ voropessanti*)?

With this ruling by The Buddha, the arahant and the *ariya* will impossibly consider attempting suicide because an arahant and *ariya* cannot deliberately

<sup>92</sup> S.IV.I.II.iv.4 'Channa-Suttaṃ', and M.III.v.2 'Chann-Ovāda-Suttaṃ' ('Channa Advice Sutta')

<sup>93</sup> At the end of the same sutta.

<sup>94</sup> For the incident in question, please see above, p. 60.

perform the blameworthy act of doing what The Buddha says is not allowable, not to be done, etc.



Today's talk is the second of four on the origin of birth, ageing&death, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*Dukkha-Samudayaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ*), the Second Noble Truth: dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*).

Last time we looked at how the bodhisatta tried to find out why there is birth, ageing&death by asking questions. The procedure according to which the bodhisatta asked questions was what The Buddha calls *paṭicca-samuppāda* (dependent origination). He explains it as:<sup>1</sup>

***Imasmim sati, idaṃ hoti; imassuppāda, idaṃ uppajjati.***

***Imasmim a-sati, idaṃ na hoti; imassa nirodhā, idaṃ nirujjati.***

**With that, this is; that arises, with the arising of this.**

**Without that, this is not; that ceases, with the cessation of this.**

Dependent origination is the law according to which all things in the world arise dependent on conditions.<sup>2</sup> Another way to explain it is to say that things in the world do not arise without a certain condition being there; if a thing in the world arises, a certain condition has given rise to it; there is a cause: no cause, no result.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, no thing arises from only one cause, and no thing arises alone: it is always many causes that give rise to many results,<sup>4</sup> although in analysis, The Buddha discusses things and their necessary conditions one by one.<sup>5</sup>

Let us take an everyday example: a cup of coffee.

We can ask: 'With what, is there a cup of coffee?' 'What are the conditions for there to be a cup of coffee; what is necessary for there to be a cup of coffee?' The answer: 'Coffee-beans are a condition for there to be a cup of coffee: no coffee-beans, no coffee.' But we cannot drink coffee beans, can we?

- So the next question is: 'With what, do coffee beans become the dark brown liquid that we drink?' With roasting and grinding, the coffee beans become coffee powder, and with boiling water, coffee powder becomes the dark brown liquid that we drink: no boiling water, no dark brown liquid that we drink.
- 'With what, is there boiling water?' With water and heat, there is boiling water (e.g water from the tap, and fire from a gas-cooker): no water or heat, no boiling water.

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. M.I.iv.8 '*Mahā-Taṇhā-Saṅkhaya-Suttam*' ('Great Craving-destruction Sutta')

<sup>2</sup> CONDITION: '(pl.) circumstances without which something cannot be (*the conditions equilibrium, happiness*) [POD]'; 'thing needed to make something else possible; thing on which another thing depends: *One of the conditions of the job is that you must be able to drive*, ie in order to get the job you must be able to drive. ° *He was allowed to go out, but his parents made it a condition that he should get home before midnight* [OALD].' '(in pl.) circumstances: that which much precede the operation of a cause (*logic*) [CTCD]'

<sup>3</sup> Please see also the bodhisatta's line of questioning about cessation, quoted below, p. 111. It is also explained in *Sammoha Vinodanī (Dispeller of Delusion)* vi.618 '*Paccayākāra Vibhaṅga*' ('Analysis of the Structure of Conditions')

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* 669

<sup>5</sup> For example, The Buddha discusses consciousness and mind-matter separately, although they are inseparable (please see the Venerable Sāriputta's explanation below, p.86), and He discusses sensation, perception and consciousness separately, although they are inseparable (please see the Venerable Sāriputta's explanation below, p.84.)

- But we cannot boil the water in the fire, can we? We need a kettle to put the water in: with water and heat and a kettle, there is boiling water: no water, or no heat or no kettle, no boiling water.
- But with coffee powder and boiling water, do we have coffee? No, we need to make an infusion of the coffee powder, and to do that, we need a cup: with boiling water, coffee powder, and a cup, there is a cup of coffee: no boiling water, or no coffee powder, or no cup, no cup of coffee. If just one of these things is missing, no cup of coffee. But is that all?
- With what, is there a cup? With what, is there a kettle? With what, the water from the tap?
- With what, are there coffee beans? With a coffee bush, there are coffee beans: no coffee bush, no coffee beans.
- And with a coffee seed, water, earth and sunlight, there is a coffee bush: no seed, or no water, or no earth, or no sunlight, no coffee bush.
- And with another coffee bush, there is a coffee seed, etc.

But that is only the material side of it. Because for all this to take place, there has to be a mind that wants to plant and maintain the coffee bushes, pick the coffee beans, dry them, roast them, grind them, pack them, etc., and there has to be a mind that wants to put coffee-powder and boiling water together in a cup. No mind that wants to do all these things, no cup of coffee. And why do we want to do that? Because of the flavour of the coffee: we crave for flavour of coffee. Thus, there is the bringing together of the boiling water, the coffee and the cup because of craving. And if we go from this cup of coffee right back to the coffee bush, we see people performing kamma because of craving: no craving, no kamma. And we can go on and on and on in all directions, and keep on finding that things arise owing to certain conditions, which then become the conditions for other things to arise, which then become the conditions for yet other things to arise, etc.: the world has no beginning or end.

The Buddha explains:<sup>6</sup>

**There will come a time, bhikkhus, when the great ocean dries up, evaporates, and is no more....**

**There will come a time, bhikkhus, when the great earth burns up, perishes, and is no more.**

**Yet, I declare, there will be no end to the suffering of beings, who (hindered by ignorance, and fettered by craving) rush on and run about.**

We rush on and run about in the round of rebirth because of conditions. Suffering arises because of conditions. Nothing in the world comes into being without certain conditions. But (except as a simile), discussing how a cup of coffee comes to be serves no good purpose: that is not the Dhamma. *Paṭicca-samuppāda* is the Dhamma, which is the Four Noble Truths.

The Buddha explained the First Noble Truth:<sup>7</sup>

**Suffering, as a Noble Truth, is this: birth is suffering, ageing is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering... in short, the five clinging-aggregates are suffering.**

In *paṭicca-samuppāda* language: ‘Birth is the condition for suffering; with birth, there is suffering’, or, ‘With the five clinging-aggregates, suffering’, or, ‘No birth,

<sup>6</sup> S.III.I.II.v.7 ‘*Gaddula-Baddha-Suttam*’ (‘Bound by a Fetter-Stick Sutta’)

<sup>7</sup> S.V.XII.ii.1 ‘*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttam*’ (‘Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta’)

no five aggregates, no suffering'.<sup>8</sup>

The Second Noble Truth:

**The origin of suffering, as a Noble Truth, is this: it is the craving that produces further coming-into-existence...**

In other words: 'Craving is the condition for suffering; with craving, there is suffering,' or, 'With birth (five clinging-aggregates), suffering', or, 'No craving, no birth, no five clinging-aggregates, no suffering'.

And the Third Noble Truth:

**Cessation of suffering, as a Noble Truth, is this: it is remainderless fading and ceasing, giving up, relinquishing, letting go and rejecting, of that same craving.**

In other words: 'The cessation of craving is the condition for the cessation of suffering; with the cessation of craving, there is the cessation of birth (five clinging-aggregates), and the cessation of suffering'. Or, 'No cessation of craving, no cessation of birth, no cessation of the five clinging-aggregates, no cessation of suffering.'

And finally the Fourth Noble Truth:

**The Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering, as a Noble Truth, is this: it is simply the Noble Eightfold Path....**

In other words: 'Development of the Noble Eightfold Path is the condition for the cessation of suffering; with development of the Noble Eightfold Path, there is the cessation of craving, and the cessation of birth, and the cessation of the five clinging-aggregates, and the cessation of suffering.'

Or, 'No development of the Noble Eightfold Path, no cessation of craving, no cessation of birth, no cessation of the five aggregates, and no cessation of suffering.'

Thus, to understand the Four Noble Truths is to understand *paṭicca-samuppāda*, which is to understand the Dhamma. The Buddha explains:<sup>9</sup>

***Yo paṭicca-samuppādaṃ passati, so Dhammaṃ passati:  
yo Dhammaṃ passati, so paṭicca-samuppādaṃ passati.  
(Whoever sees dependent origination, sees the Dhamma;  
whoever sees the Dhamma, sees dependent origination.)***

Or: 'Seeing dependent origination is a condition for seeing the Dhamma', or 'Not to see dependent origination is to not see the Dhamma.'

To truly see *paṭicca-samuppāda* is to attain Nibbāna, although Nibbāna is itself without a cause: there is no condition for the existence of Nibbāna: it is Unconditioned.<sup>10</sup> But there are very, very many dependently originated conditions for the arising of the consciousness that knows and sees Nibbāna.

<sup>8</sup> For this negative conditionality, please see also the bodhisatta's line of questioning quoted below, p.111.

<sup>9</sup> M.I.iii.8 '*Mahā-Hatthi-Padopama-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Elephant's Footprint Sutta')

<sup>10</sup> For Nibbāna's being unconditioned, please see quotation 168.



Let us then look again at the bodhisatta's questions and answers. Last time, we discussed the first four answers that he realized. The first answer:<sup>11</sup>

**'Birth is the condition for ageing&death (*jarā-maraṇaṃ*)'**

Ageing&death are the end of one life. But for a life to end, it needs first to begin: the beginning of a life is birth. No birth, no life; no life, no ageing&death.

Then, the bodhisatta realized:

- **'With coming-into-existence, there is birth; coming-into-existence is the condition for birth (*bhava-paccayā jāti*)'**...
- **'Clinging is the condition for coming-into-existence (*upādāna-paccayā bhavo*)'**...
- **'Craving is the condition for clinging (*taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṃ*)'**...

The Texts<sup>12</sup> explain that these three (coming-into-existence, clinging and craving) are the condition for birth. Coming-into-existence, clinging and craving in our past life were the condition for our present birth, which will end with ageing-and-death. And our coming-into-existence, clinging and craving in this life will be the condition for our future birth, ageing-and-death: this goes on and on and on from life to life.<sup>13</sup> No coming-into-existence, or no clinging, or no craving, no birth; no birth, no ageing&death.

The bodhisatta's fifth question was:

**'With what, is there craving? What is the condition for craving?'**

And he realized:

**'With sensation (*vedanā*), there is craving; sensation is the condition for craving (*vedanā-paccayā taṇhā*)'**

In other words: no sensation, no craving.

And The Buddha explains:<sup>14</sup>

**There are, bhikkhus, these three sensations. What three?**

- [1] **Pleasant sensation (*sukhā vedanā*),**
- [2] **unpleasant sensation (*dukkhā vedanā*),**
- [3] **neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant sensation (*a-dukkha-ma-sukhā vedanā*).**  
(This we may in English call 'neutral sensation'.)

Sensations are nothing more than the effect of an object having struck the sense: being affected by a sight that has struck the eye; a sound, the ear; an odour, the nose; a flavour, the tongue; a touch, the body, and a mental object the mind.<sup>15</sup> Three sensations arising from six senses makes eighteen kinds of sensation.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> S.II.I.10 '*Gotama-Suttaṃ*' ('Gotama Sutta')

<sup>12</sup> Please see the arahant Venerable Sāriputta's analysis, in his text, the *Paṭisambhidā Magga* I.iv (*Discrimination Path*).

<sup>13</sup> Please see Table 3 below, p. 98.

<sup>14</sup> S.IV.II.i.2 '*Sukha-Suttaṃ*' ('Pleasure Sutta')

<sup>15</sup> The Buddha's explains: 'There are these six kinds of sensation: eye-contact-born (*cakkhu-samphassa-jā*)... ear-contact-born (*śota-samphassa-jā*)... nose-contact-born (*ghāna-samphassa-jā*)... tongue-contact-born (*jivhā-samphassa-jā*)... body-contact-born (*kāya-samphassa-jā*)... mind contact-born sensation (*mano-samphassa-jā-vedanā*).' (S.II.I.2 '*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Analysis Sutta')) This His explanation belongs properly here, but because contact has not yet been explained, it has not been included. For an explanation of contact, please see following section.

<sup>16</sup> Please see also M.III.iv.7 '*Saḷ-Āyatana-Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Sixfold Base Analysis Sutta')

This is also very straightforward. A sight strikes the eye, and there is a sensation. For example, the subdued and soft colours at dawn and dusk strike the eye, and a pleasant sensation arises. (We think dawn and dusk are romantic, and photographers very often take pictures at that time.) It is the same when the natural colours of trees and grass strike the eye. (People like to go for walks in what they call ‘nature’, and ‘nature’ photographs are also popular.) But when the bright colour of the sun at noon strikes the eye, an unpleasant sensation arises. (We put on sunglasses, and photographers never take romantic photographs at noon.) It is the same when the bright light from a TV screen strikes the eye. (We get a headache from watching too much TV.), or brightly coloured clothes strike the eye (We think they are immodest, until with further thought, we decide they are exciting). But how does this come about?

The bodhisatta’s sixth question was:<sup>17</sup>

**‘With what, is there sensation? What is the condition for sensation?’**

And he realized:

**‘With contact (*phassa*), there is sensation; contact is the condition for sensation (*phassa-paccayā vedanā*).’**

In other words: no contact, no sensation.<sup>18</sup>

And The Buddha explains:<sup>19</sup>

- [1] **Dependent on the eye and sights (*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca*), there arises eye consciousness (*uppajjati cakkhu-viññāṇaṃ*): with the meeting of the three, there is contact (*tinnaṃ saṅgati phassa*);**
- [2] **dependent on the ear and sounds (*sotañca paṭicca sadde ca*), there arises ear consciousness (*uppajjati sota-viññāṇaṃ*): with the meeting of the three, there is contact;**
- [3] **dependent on the nose and odours (*ghānañca paṭicca gandhe ca*), there arises nose consciousness (*uppajjati ghāna-viññāṇaṃ*): with the meeting of the three, there is contact;**
- [4] **dependent on the tongue and flavours (*jivhāñca paṭicca rase ca*), there arises tongue consciousness (*uppajjati jivhā-viññāṇaṃ*): with the meeting of the three, there is contact;**
- [5] **dependent on the body and touches (*kāyañca paṭicca phoṭṭabe ca*), there arises body consciousness (*uppajjati kāya-viññāṇaṃ*): with the meeting of the three, there is contact;**
- [6] **dependent on the mind and other things (*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca*), there arises mind consciousness (*uppajjati mano-viññāṇaṃ*): with the meeting of the three, there is contact.**

As discussed before, sensation is nothing more than being affected by an object that has struck the sense. And it is through the five material senses that the respective material object is cognized (they are the doors (*dvāra*)), and the cognition itself takes place with the arising of the respective kind of consciousness. The immaterial sense (the mind), on the other hand, cognizes those five material objects, and all other things (*dhammā*): perceptions, thoughts, ideas, memories, emotions intentions, etc., even Nibbāna (outside the world), for Nibbāna is cognized by the mind.

Thus, The Buddha explains:<sup>20</sup>

**There are six kinds of contact:**

<sup>17</sup> S.II.i.10 ‘*Gotama-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Gotama Sutta’)

<sup>18</sup> By way of the five aggregates, The Buddha explains also: ‘With the arising of contact, there is the arising of sensation [six kinds]... perception [six kinds]... formations [six kinds of volition]...’ (S.III.I.II.i.4 ‘*Upādāna-Paripavatta-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Clinging-Phases Sutta’))

<sup>19</sup> M.III.v.6 ‘*Cha-Chakka-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Six Sixes Sutta’)

<sup>20</sup> S.II.i.2 ‘*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Analysis Sutta’)

- [1] eye contact (*cakkhu-samphasso*), [4] tongue contact (*jivhā-samphasso*),  
 [2] ear contact (*sota-samphasso*), [5] body contact (*kāya-samphasso*),  
 [3] nose contact (*ghāna-samphasso*), [6] mind contact (*mano-samphasso*).

This is also very straightforward. With the meeting of three things:

- |  |   |                 |
|--|---|-----------------|
| 1) a spark from the flint wheel of a lighter | } | a flame appears |
| 2) the lighter fuel                          |   |                 |
| 3) oxygen                                    |   |                 |

Likewise, with the meeting of three things:

- |   |   |                                  |
|---|---|----------------------------------|
| 1) the sense                                | } | the mental factor contact arises |
| 2) its object                               |   |                                  |
| 3) the respective consciousness (cognition) |   |                                  |

For example with the meeting of:

- |  |   |                                      |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1) the eye                                 | } | the mental factor eye contact arises |
| 2) a sight                                 |   |                                      |
| 3) an eye consciousness (visual cognition) |   |                                      |

Now the bodhisatta had understood that sensation is the condition for craving, and contact is the condition for sensation. Then the bodhisatta wanted to know the condition for each of the three elements that bring about contact.

Hence, his seventh question was:

**‘With what, is there contact? What is the condition for contact?’**

And he realized:

**‘With the six bases (*saḷ-āyatana*), there is contact; the six bases are the condition for contact (*saḷ-āyatana-paccayā phasso*).’**

In other words: no six bases, no contact.

The six bases are in fact each a pair: six internal bases (*cha ajjhattika āyatana*) and their matching six external bases (*cha bāhirā āyatana*). The Buddha explains:<sup>21</sup>

**There are, Ānanda, these six internal and external bases (*ajjhattika-bāhirāni āyatanāni*):**

- [1-2] the eye and colour (*cakkhu-c-eva rūpā ca*),  
 [3-4] the ear and sounds (*sotañ-ca saddā ca*),  
 [5-6] the nose and odours (*ghānañ-ca gandhā ca*),  
 [7-8] the tongue and flavours (*jivhā ca rasā ca*),  
 [9-10] the body and touches (*kāyo ca phoṭṭhabbā ca*),  
 [11-12] the mind and other objects (*mano ca dhammā ca*).

Thus, each internal and external base make up two of the three elements that bring about contact.

This is also very straightforward. Each internal base has a respective external base: the eye has sights, the ear has sounds, the nose has odours, the tongue has flavours, the body has tangibles, the mind has those objects,<sup>22</sup> and all other objects:

<sup>21</sup> M.III.ii.5 ‘*Bahu-Dhātuka-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Many Elements Sutta’). Analysing the six bases as a factor of dependent origination, The Buddha in S.II.I.2 ‘*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Analysis Sutta’) gives just the six internal bases.

<sup>22</sup> The Buddha explains: ‘Now, Brahmin, these five faculties [eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body facul-

other things (*dhammā*).<sup>23</sup>

Then, what is the condition for the six bases? This was the bodhisatta's eighth question:

**'With what, are there the six bases? What is the condition for the six bases?'**

And he realized:

**'With mind-matter (*nāma-rūpa*), there are the six bases; mind-matter is the condition for the six bases (*nāma-rūpa-paccayā saḷ-āyatanaṃ*).'**

In other words, no mind-matter, no six bases.

And The Buddha explains mind-matter:<sup>24</sup>

**And what, bhikkhus, is mind-matter (*nāma-rūpa*)?**

- **Sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), volition (*cetanā*), contact (*phassa*), attention (*manasikāro*). This is called mind (*nāma*).**
- **The four great elements (*cattāro ca mahā-bhūtā*), and matter derived from the four great elements (*cattunnañca mahā-bhūtānaṃ upādāya-rūpaṃ*). This is called matter (*rūpa*).**

And The Buddha explains the four great elements:<sup>25</sup>

**There are, bhikkhus, these four elements. What four?**

**The earth element (*pathavī-dhātu*), the water element (*āpo-dhātu*), the fire element (*tejo-dhātu*), the air element (*vayo-dhātu*).**

And He analyses them:<sup>26</sup>

[1] **What, bhikkhu, is the earth element? The earth element may be either internal or external.**

**What is the internal earth element?**

**Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified, and clung to, that is,**

- |                   |                    |                   |                              |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| [1.1] head-hairs, | [1.6] flesh,       | [1.11] heart,     | [1.16] large intestine,      |
| [1.2] body hairs, | [1.7] sinews,      | [1.12] liver,     | [1.17] small intestine,      |
| [1.3] nails,      | [1.8] bones,       | [1.13] diaphragm, | [1.18] gorge,                |
| [1.4] teeth,      | [1.9] bone-marrow, | [1.14] spleen,    | [1.19] faeces...             |
| [1.5] skin,       | [1.10] kidneys,    | [1.15] lungs,     | [[1.20] brain] <sup>27</sup> |

Thus, we understand that earth element refers to the quality of solidity (hard or soft) in the matter that is our body, the body of another, and any other matter: the softness or hardness of a shirt,<sup>28</sup> a banana,<sup>29</sup> an ice-cream, a chair, the road, etc. The

ty], having separate spheres and separate fields, not experiencing each other's sphere and field, have the mind (*mano*) as their refuge (*paṭisaraṇaṃ*), and the mind experiences (*paccanubhoti*) their spheres and fields.' (S.V.IV.v.2 '*Uṇṇābha Brahmaṇa-Suttaṃ*' ('Uṇṇābha Brahmin Sutta'))

<sup>23</sup> OTHER THINGS (*dhammā*): for some details, please see also below p.79.

<sup>24</sup> S.II.I.2 '*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Analysis Sutta')

<sup>25</sup> S.II.III.iv.1 '*Catu-Dhātu-Suttaṃ*' ('Four Elements')

<sup>26</sup> M.III.iv.10 '*Dhātu-Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Elements Analysis Sutta')

<sup>27</sup> DIAPHRAGM: this is not the diaphragm as the midriff, but the diaphragm as meaning the white, net-like membrane which separates the different sections of flesh throughout the body. 'a thin partition or dividing membrane [CTCD]'. BRAIN: describing the various parts of the body in Sn.i.11 '*Vijaya-Suttaṃ*' ('The Victory Sutta'), The Buddha includes 'brain (*matthaluṅga*)'. Brain is included in the commentarial listing of what then comes to twenty earth-element parts.

<sup>28</sup> Here, the author drew attention to how, when people buy clothes, they always feel the material with their fingers, to test the earth element.

earth element is the foundation for all the other elements, and is also the foundation for materialism and sensuality. Modern Man's worship of the body and material possessions is founded in the earth element. Take the huge cosmetics, hair-dressing, and fashion industry: it is aimed at the visible internal earth element: head-hairs, body-hairs, nails and skin. Materialists also like big things and many things. To a materialist, big boots, sky-scrapers, big cars, and many material possessions are imposing and important, and give a deluded sense of security. The invisible earth element, however, is not prized: many people feel sick if they see the insides of a body, and much hatred is attached, for example, to the earth element that we all carry around all the time, and occasionally deposit in the lavatory.

**[2] What, bhikkhu, is the water element? The water element may be either internal or external. What is the internal water element?**

**Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is water, watery, and clung-to, that is,**

- [2.1] bile, [2.4] blood, [2.7] tears, [2.10] snot,  
 [2.2] phlegm, [2.5] sweat, [2.8] grease, [2.11] oil of the joints,  
 [2.3] pus, [2.6] fat, [2.9] spittle, [2.12] urine....<sup>30</sup>

The water element is important for making things run smoothly, and without water, we die. But we are usually ashamed of our bodily fluids: we try all the time to get rid of them by spitting them out, or wiping them away with tissue, etc. Incontinent people often suffer because they think: 'The wet patch in my trousers is me!' And we complain about external water element such as rain (unless we are a farmer), although we like to see a river, and we like swimming: in the water, the earth element loses its weight and unwieldiness, and we feel free in the water.

**[3] What, bhikkhu, is the fire element? The fire element may be either internal or external. What is the internal fire element?**

**Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is fire, fiery, and clung-to, that is,**

- [3.1] that by which one is warmed, [3.4] that by which what is eaten, drunk,  
 [3.2] that by which one ages, consumed, and tasted, get completely dig-  
 [3.3] that by which one is consumed, gested....

The Buddha is here referring specifically to the digestive heat of the body, but the Texts explain that the fire element is in fact temperature: both heat and cold.<sup>31</sup> The heat of the sun is essential to life (without heat there is no regeneration of matter), but when it gets too hot for us, we long for a cold drink, or a fan, etc. Hot food is

<sup>29</sup> Here, the author drew attention to how, when people are at the fruit market, they always feel the fruit with their fingers, to test the earth element.

<sup>30</sup> These make twelve parts. Together with the previous twenty, they make up what is called 'Thirty-Two Parts of the Body': a meditation subject aimed at making the yogi understand that there is nothing beautiful about the body. Please see Vis.viii 'Anussati Kammatthāna Niddesa' ('Recollection Meditation Subjects Description') PoP.178ff.

<sup>31</sup> VsṬ.459 explains: [question] 'Is not cold apprehended by touching: and that is the water element? [Answer] Certainly it is apprehended, but it is not the water element. What is it then? It is just the fire element. For there is the sensation of cold when heat is sluggish. There is no quality that is called cold; there is only the assumption of coldness due to the sluggishness of the state of heat. How is that to be known? Because of the unreliability of the sensation of cold, like 'beyond and not beyond'. For in hot weather, while those who stand in the sun and go into the shade have the sensation of cold, yet those who go to the same place from an underground cave have the sensation of heat. And if coldness were the water element, it would be found in a single cluster [matter comprises particles that are clusters of elements] along with heat, but it is not so found.'

easier to digest, but we are also attached to hot food because of flavour. Rice and curry must be hot; if it is lukewarm, we get upset and heat it up. A Coca-Cola, on the other hand, must be cold.

**[4] What, bhikkhu, is the air element? The air element may be either internal or external. What is the internal air element?**

**Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is air, airy, and clung-to, that is,**

**[4.1] up-going winds, [4.4] winds in the bowels,**

**[4.2] down-going winds, [4.5] winds that course through the limbs,**

**[4.3] winds in the belly, [4.6] the in&out breath....**

The air element is necessary for movement. Just as the air element that is the wind moves leaves in the trees, so is it the air element that moves our limbs. Bodily speed is highly valued: children like running around, athletes get drunk on it, and a fast car is often prized more than a big car. There is all the time air in our body, as from our digestion. In some societies people identify so much with the air element, that when wind comes out of the mouth or below, they and everyone else get very embarrassed. For the same reason, sometimes when meditators practise mindfulness-of-breathing, and the in&out-breath becomes very, very fine, they fall in love with it, and rave about ‘the beautiful breath’.<sup>32</sup>

Apart from these four elements, The Buddha spoke also of matter derived from the four great elements, for example, the elements colour, sound, odour, flavour, nutritive essence, sex, and space.<sup>33</sup> Sound, for example, is the striking of one earth element with another: if you strike the earth element of the floor with the earth element of your hand, sound arises. Likewise, the sounds that come out of our mouth vary according to how we block the earth element of the air with the earth element of our tongue, teeth and lips, or with the earth element of our throat.<sup>34</sup> The sex element is that by which someone’s body, voice, movements, etc. tell us: ‘This is a male’, or, ‘This is a female.’ It exists obviously only in animate matter.

All matter, comprises the four great elements and derived materiality: for example, so long as the fire element of ice-cream is cold, the earth element predominates; even so, ice-cream is wet, and we can often see air-bubbles in ice-cream, ice-cream comprises also colour, flavour, odour, and people get fat from eating too much ice-cream, because it is also rich in nutritive essence.

<sup>32</sup> In such a case, the meditator does not realize that all formations (incl. the body-formation of breath) are impermanent, suffering, and non-self. The Buddha explains: ‘An ignorant, ordinary person who is in the True Men’s Dhamma unskilled, and in the True Men’s Dhamma untrained... delights in earth... water... fire... air... the sensed... the cognized...’ (M.I.i.1 ‘*Mūla Pariyāya-Suttam*’ (‘Root Exposition Sutta’)) Please see also The Buddha’s explanation, please see below, p.263.

<sup>33</sup> In the ‘*Mahā-Gopāḷaka-Suttam*’ (‘Great Cowherd Sutta’ M.I.iv.4), The Buddha explains that a bhikkhu who does not know the four great elements and the matter derived from the four great elements ‘is incapable of growth, increase, and fulfilment in this Dhamma-Vinaya’. (Please see The Buddha’s explanation above, footnote 29, p.28) But there is no sutta where He explains matter derived from the four great elements. One must seek the answer in the ancient authoritative commentaries: e.g. Vis.xiv ‘*Khandha-Niddesa*’ (‘Aggregate Description’) PoP.36ff, and the Abhidhamma. For related matters, please see also below Appendix IV ‘Is This the Dhamma-Vinaya?’, p.281.

<sup>34</sup> Vis.xiv PoP.62 explains: ‘Verbal intimation is the mode and the alteration in the consciousness-originated earth element that causes that occurrence of speech utterance which mode and alteration are the condition for the knocking together of clung-to-matter [explained by Vis].452 as the vocal apparatus] Its function is to display intention. It is manifested as the cause of the voice in speech.’

Matter consists of elementary particles. With proper meditation, we are able to see them, and with more meditation, we are able to penetrate them and thereby see ultimate matter (*paramattha rūpa*). Since modern so-called science depends entirely on technology and the material senses (the material eye, etc., instead of the eye of the mind), it can neither see these elementary particles, nor penetrate them and see ultimate matter. But with proper meditation, we can see ultimate matter, and see that matter is, indeed, nothing other than the four elements, and a small number of derived elements. Even the ‘beautiful’ breath that with mindfulness-of-breathing meditation becomes more and more subtle till it eventually disappears (at the fourth *jhāna*) is no more beautiful than these four elements and derived elements. These rudiments about matter were known to all ancient sciences, but are unknown to modern so-called ‘science’, because of blindness and wrong view (identity view). Hence, modern science (incl. medicine) considers the four elements a quaint belief from the past,<sup>35</sup> and itself labours under the delusion that matter (indeed the world) comprises very, very many discrete and individual substances/sensences.<sup>36</sup> It is again the materialist view of quantity over quality.<sup>37</sup>

With the explanation of matter, the five material bases (eye, ear, nose, tongue and body) have been explained. And the sixth? That is mind (*nāma*). The Buddha explained it as:

- [1] **Sensation** (*vedanā*): discussed earlier: pleasant, unpleasant and neutral sensation;<sup>38</sup>
- [2] **Perception** (*saññā*): first the recognition of colour,<sup>39</sup> then recognition of the object: we know a banana is a banana only because we recognize that a thing with such-and-such features is known in the world as a banana;
- [3] **Volition** (*cetanā*): *kamma*: motivated by either greed, hatred, or delusion, or non-greed, non-hatred, or non-delusion;
- [4] **Contact** (*phasso*): just discussed: it is the mental factor that arises with, for example, the meeting of eye (internal base), sight (external base), and eye consciousness;
- [5] **Attention** (*manasikāro*): the factor by which the mind attends now to a sight, now

<sup>35</sup> E.g. ‘ELEMENT In the past, the elements were thought to be earth, air, fire, and water from which people believed everything else was made.’ (CIDE) ‘(according to ancient and medieval philosophers) any of the four substances, earth, air, fire, and water, from which the universe was believed to be composed [OALD].’

<sup>36</sup> The Buddha describes such delusion to a Brahmin student: ‘Suppose, student, there were a man born blind, who could not see dark and light colours, who could not see blue, yellow, red or pink forms, who could not see what was even and uneven, who could not see the stars or the sun and moon. He might say thus: “There are no dark and light colours, and no one who sees dark and light colours; there are no blue, yellow, red, or pink colours, and no one who sees blue, yellow, red or pink colours; there is nothing even and uneven, and no one who sees anything even and uneven; there are no stars and no sun and moon, and no one who sees stars and the sun and moon. I do not know these, I do not see these, therefore these do not exist.”’ (M.II.v.9 ‘*Subha-Suttam*’ (Subha is the Brahmin student who is The Buddha’s interlocutor.))

<sup>37</sup> ELEMENT: a simple substance which cannot be reduced to smaller chemical parts • *Aluminium is an element.* • *There are more than 100 elements.* (CIDE)

<sup>38</sup> Please see analysis above p.68

<sup>39</sup> S.III.I.II.iii.7 ‘*Khajjanīya-Suttam*’ (‘Being Devoured Sutta’)

to a sound, now to an odour, etc.<sup>40</sup>

But how do mind-matter arise? This was the bodhisatta's ninth question:

**'With what, is there mind-matter? What is the condition for mind-matter?'**

And he realized:

**'With consciousness (*viññāṇa*), there is mind-matter; consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is the condition for mind-matter (*viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṃ*).'**

In other words: no consciousness, no mind-matter.

This is in fact very straightforward. If there is no consciousness, the matter that we call our body is just a corpse: a corpse has no sense bases, it is just dead flesh. Without consciousness, sensation, perception, volition, contact, and attention with regard to an object through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind cannot take place.

And The Buddha explains consciousness:<sup>41</sup>

**There are six kinds of consciousness:**

- [1] eye consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇaṃ*), [4] tongue consciousness (*jivhā-viññāṇaṃ*),  
 [2] ear consciousness (*sota-viññāṇaṃ*), [5] body consciousness (*kāya-viññāṇaṃ*),  
 [3] nose consciousness (*ghāna-viññāṇaṃ*), [6] mind consciousness (*mano-viññāṇaṃ*).

This is also very straightforward. Before, The Buddha explained, for example:<sup>42</sup>

**Dependent on the eye and sights, there arises eye consciousness: with the meeting of the three, there is contact.**

That is, dependent on the internal base (eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind base) and the external base (sight-, sound-, odour-, flavour-, touch-, and base of other things), there arises the corresponding consciousness (eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body- and mind consciousness respectively). Consciousness is not merely consciousness: it is consciousness of something. Consciousness cannot arise without an object.

One consciousness arises, passes away, and a new consciousness arises and passes away, and then another consciousness arises and passes away. Each one arises because an external base has struck upon its respective internal base. It is just one thing after another,<sup>43</sup> day and night. In one second, billions of consciousnesses arise one after the other, day and night.

Have you ever seen a monkey as it moves through the treetops? It moves by grabbing hold of one branch after the other. In the same way one consciousness arises by grabbing hold of a sight, then it lets go, and another consciousness arises grabbing hold of another thing and lets go, and then another consciousness grabs hold of a sound, etc. The Buddha explains:<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> The Texts explain mind-matter also from the perspective of the five clinging-aggregates: MATTER is the first clinging-aggregate; SENSATION the second; PERCEPTION the third, whereas VOLITION, CONTACT and ATTENTION come under the fourth FORMATIONS. Please see also above p.26.

<sup>41</sup> S.II.I.2 '*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Analysis Sutta')

<sup>42</sup> M.III.v.6 '*Cha-Chakka-Suttaṃ*' ('Six Sixes Sutta')

<sup>43</sup> ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER: (idiom British English) a succession of unpleasant or unwelcome happenings (OALD)

<sup>44</sup> S.II.I.vii.1 '*A'ssutavā-Suttaṃ*' ('Unlearned Sutta')



Just as a monkey roaming through the forest grabs hold of one branch, lets that go and grabs another, then lets that go and grabs yet another, so too that, bhikkhus, which is called ‘thought (*cittam*)’ and ‘mentality (*mano*)’ and ‘consciousness (*viññāṇam*)’<sup>45</sup> arises as one thing and ceases as another day and night.

That is our life, just grabbing one thing after the other. One consciousness following the next. That is *samsāra*, that is suffering. We suffer because we are Māra’s monkeys before we are The Buddha’s disciples: we are disinclined to climbing down from the tree-tops.

It is not easy to climb down, because for every step we take down from the trees, the more we try to fathom the Dhamma, the more unfathomable does it appear. ‘Why does it have to be so technical?’ ‘How can all these analyses be of any help?’ Such questions arise out of ignorance, laziness and conceit.

That is why we shall also next time discuss mind-matter and consciousness.

Please allow me to close this talk with The Buddha’s analysis of what happens if we neglect study of the Dhamma, study of the profound Texts:<sup>46</sup>

**The man of little learning ages like an ox. His flesh grows; his wisdom does not grow.**

The man of little learning ages like an ox, or like a monkey: it comes to the same thing. He does not age in the Dhamma. Perhaps today, there has been some ageing in the Dhamma, perhaps we have made a move down from the tree-tops.

Thank you.

<sup>45</sup> The commentary explains that all three terms are synonyms for MIND BASE (*man-āyatanaṃ*), the sixth internal base (please see above, p.70). In practice, discerning and analysing ultimate reality, clearly the different terms are of no import. In order that the student avoid confusion and misrepresentation, however, the following note from the Venerable Ñāṇamoli’s *Path of Purification* (PoP), p.507, may be of assistance: ‘Pali has five principal words, *nāma*, *viññāṇa*, *mano*, *citta*, and *ceto* against the normal English *consciousness*, and *mind*. While their etymology can be looked up in the dictionary, one of two points need noting here. *Nāma* (rendered [in PoP] by ‘mentality’ when not used to refer to a *name*) is almost confined in the sense considered to the expression *nāma-rūpa* (mentality-materiality [in *Modern Birth, Ageing&Death* translated as ‘mind-matter’]) as the fourth member of the Dependent Origination, where it comprises the three mental aggregates of feeling, perceptions, and formations, but not that of consciousness (*viññāṇa*). *Viññāṇa* (rendered [in PoP] by ‘consciousness’) is, loosely, more or less a synonym for *mano* and *citta*; technically, it is bare cognition considered apart from feeling, perception and formations. *Mano* (rendered [in PoP] by ‘mind’), when used technically, is confined to the sixth internal base for contact.... *Citta* (rendered [in PoP] by ‘mind and ‘consciousness’ or [‘manner of] consciousness’), when used technically, refers to a momentary type-situation considered as *viññāṇa* in relation to the tone of its concomitant feeling, perception and formations. Possibly a better rendering would have been ‘cognizance’ throughout. It carries a flavour of its etymological relative *cetanā* (‘volition’). *Ceto* (another etymological relative, rendered by ‘heart— i.e. ‘seat of the emotions’—, ‘will’ or ‘mind’), when used loosely is very near to *citta*; but technically, it is restricted to one or two such expressions as *ceto-vimutti* (‘mind-deliverance’ or ‘heart-deliverance’).’ The Venerable Ñāṇatiloka is less elaborate: ‘*CITTA*: ‘Mind’, ‘Consciousness’, ‘State of Consciousness’, is a synonym of *mano*... and *viññāṇa*.’ *MANĀYATANA* ‘Mind Base’, is a collective term for all the different states of consciousness.’ (*Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, published by Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre, Singapore, 1991.)

<sup>46</sup> Dhp.xi.7 ‘*Jarā Vagga*’ (‘Ageing Chapter’)

Today's talk is the third of four on the origin of birth, ageing&death, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*Dukkha-Samudayaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ*) the Second Noble Truth: dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*).

Last time, we concluded with The Buddha's description of our life, which is nothing other than a continuum of discrete consciousnesses, each with its individual object. The Buddha compared it to a monkey roaming the forest, grabbing now one branch, now another:<sup>1</sup>

**Just as a monkey roaming through the forest grabs hold of one branch, lets that go and grabs another, then lets that go and grabs yet another, so too that, bhikkhus, which is called 'thought (*cittaṃ*)' and 'mentality(*mano*)' and 'consciousness(*viññāṇaṃ*)' arises as one thing and ceases as another day and night.**

As discussed in the previous talk, consciousness arises because of the meeting between one of the six internal bases and its respective external base.<sup>2</sup> Five of the external bases are matter (*rūpa*): the colour, sound, odour, flavour and touch bases. Each of them strikes a material internal base:

- 1) the colour base strikes the eye base.
- 2) the sound base strikes the ear base.
- 3) the odour base strikes the nose base.
- 4) the flavour base strikes the tongue base.
- 5) the touch base strikes the body base.

These five material objects strike also upon the sixth internal base,<sup>3</sup> the immaterial internal base, which is the mind base: it is mind (*nāma*). But the immaterial base takes also its own exclusive objects, which are the sixth external base: other things (*dhammā*). Some of them are matter, for example, matter of past and future lives, or matter of other realms of existence;<sup>4</sup> some of them are mind (*nāma*), such as attention, consciousness, sensation, perception, volition, thought, memory, etc.; some of them are neither mind nor matter, such as concepts (*paññatti*), and Nibbāna.

The monkey grabs branch after branch, and as external base after external base strikes upon internal base after internal base, we attend to object after ob-

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<sup>1</sup> S.II.I.vii.1 '*A-srutavā-Suttaṃ*' ('Unlearned Sutta'), quoted above p.76.

<sup>2</sup> Please see The Buddha's explanation above, p.70.

<sup>3</sup> Please see The Buddha's explanation above, footnote 22, p.71.

<sup>4</sup> There is also the matter which is the instrument by which sights enter through the eye and are registered by consciousness, the so-called eye transparent element (*cakkhu-pasāda*). Such matter can clearly not be the instrument for seeing itself: hence it is one of the kinds of matter that can be seen by only the mind. The matter of the ghost realm, the hells, and the deva worlds can usually not be seen with the sensual eye of human beings either: it too can usually be seen only with the mind. The same goes for matter of past and future. It is owing to modern science's dependence on technology (matter of the human (sensual) realm), and the view that knowledge which is not public is not scientific (the view that for knowledge to be scientific, it must be accessible to all) that modern science's knowledge about mind and matter is not only negligible but also incoherent, and why modern science is in the dark about kamma, rebirth and other realms of existence: the limitations of modern science are the condition for modern science's foundation of wrong view.

ject: we grab external base after external base. The attention means that the external base has struck upon the internal base, and the respective consciousness has arisen, together with contact.<sup>5</sup> For example, colour strikes upon the eye, we attend to it, and eye consciousness has arisen, which means there has arisen also eye contact. There are thus six kinds of consciousness: eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind consciousness.<sup>6</sup> Six kinds of consciousness arise dependent on six internal and external bases, which gives six kinds of contact that arise at that time: eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind contact.<sup>5</sup>

This is life broken down into its elements according to the principle of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*). With proper meditation, we can see this very clearly. Without meditation, it can be very difficult to see, and we may think it is quite unnecessary to involve ourselves in complicated technicalities. We may even think it is not real Dhamma. We may even say: ‘It is just concepts: not the Dhamma! Trust your own experience!’

Yes, dependent origination is indeed concepts. But so is our own experience. To perceive the bare realities that we cognize, and ‘experience’ them is to conceptualize them. Concepts are necessary for any understanding, and for any explanation. Even to explain how to make a cup of coffee, we depend on concepts. But if we base our conceptual understanding on our own benighted experience, we do not understand the Dhamma. To put an end to suffering, we need to learn the concepts of Dhamma as they are explained by The Buddha, because they are based on His experience of perfect enlightenment: they are concepts that reflect reality as seen by an arahant and Buddha. Indeed, without concepts, how could any Buddha, or anyone at all for that matter, teach anything at all?

Let us then see what may and does happen if we think we should ignore the many concepts taught by The Buddha (from His Perfectly Enlightened experience),<sup>7</sup> and trust only our own conceptualization of our own (benighted) experience.

Our own experience of consciousness is that, as we sit here, we hear sounds, see sights, feel our body on the floor, etc., we see, hear, smell, taste, feel on the body, and think, remember, perceive, etc. all at the same time. Then we may think: ‘How can there be different consciousnesses?’ And as we think further, our natural conceit rears its head, and we think: ‘It is all nonsense! Clearly there is only one consciousness! Otherwise, how can there be rebirth!?!’<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Please see The Buddha’s explanation above p.69.

<sup>6</sup> Please see The Buddha’s explanation above p.75.

<sup>7</sup> The Buddha explains that He teaches only such of which He has personal and direct knowledge. Please see His explanation below, p.112.

<sup>8</sup> The bigger blunder is to deny rebirth on the grounds that SāmaññaBuddha very clearly says there is no soul/self that can run on from life to life: this is a case of using the Dhamma to refute the Dhamma. Such a wrong view arises owing to ‘learned’ confusion between conventional and ultimate language. With such confusion as condition, there may then be the view that everything The Buddha says about the relationship between kamma and rebirth is in fact the work of decadent bhikkhus of the past, who corrupted the ‘Original Dhamma.’ This view is very popular, not least in ㊦㊧㊨㊩, ‘progressive’, ‘scientific’ ‘Buddhism’, and amounts to little less than very serious wrong view, with very grave results: please see further below, p.106. And for The Buddha’s explanation of this as fundamental wrong view, please see footnote 39, p. 99, and for the criteria by which to decide whether a teaching is The Buddha’s Word, please see below, Appendix IV ‘Is

This is what we are inclined naturally to think, even those of us who consider ourselves to be Buddhists. We begin to speak of things like the original mind, the original consciousness, the one mind, etc. Such benighted views arise out of our natural ignorance, craving, and natural conceit.

Once, there was a bhikkhu who did just this. His name was Sāti, and he was son of a fisherman. He declared:<sup>9</sup>

**As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Exalted One, it is the same consciousness that rushes on and runs about, not another.**

The Buddha explains that we think this because we look back into the past, and into the future, and think it is all the same ‘me’.<sup>10</sup>

This view we discussed before:<sup>11</sup> it manifests as self-belief clinging (*atta-vād-upā-dānam*), and is also called identity view (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*). It is a metaphysic<sup>12</sup> (*diṭṭhi-gata*), that arises from craving to come into existence (*bhava-taṇhā*). It manifests as the eternity view (*sassata-diṭṭhi*), which is to think that there is a self, a soul, a spirit, or consciousness that transmigrates from life to life, now as one kind of being, now as another: it is the view of reincarnation.<sup>13</sup> But The Buddha does not teach reincarnation, because Buddhas do not depend on metaphysics: the view they depend on is the direct view of knowing and seeing.<sup>14</sup> The Buddha explains:<sup>15</sup>

**...metaphysics (*diṭṭhi-gata*) is something the Tathāgata has put away.**

What The Buddha has seen (and what we may verify through our own meditation) is that our rushing on and running about in *saṃsāra* are, have been, and will be nothing other than one consciousness and mind-matter arising, persisting and then passing away, followed by another consciousness and mind-matter arising, persisting and then passing away: there is no self, no soul, no essence, etc. Not even if we are reborn as a monkey (and go a-roaming through the forest) is there anything else; that was a simile, relying on concepts.

The Texts explain that when The Buddha recounted His past lives to the bhikkhus, some could understand it only as a transmigrating consciousness that takes rebirth now here, now there. The bhikkhu Sāti (son of a fisherman) was one such bhikkhu. And when other bhikkhus explained that his view was con-

This the Dhamma-Vinaya?’ , p.281.

<sup>9</sup> M.I.iv.8 ‘*Mahā-Taṇhā-Saṅkhaya-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Great Craving-Destruction Sutta’)

<sup>10</sup> The Buddha explains this view in M.I.i.2 ‘*Sabb-Āsava-Suttaṃ*’ (‘All the Taints Sutta’)

<sup>11</sup> Please see above, p.50ff

<sup>12</sup> METAPHYSICS: the Pali is *diṭṭhi-gata* view (*diṭṭhi*), gone (*gata*): arrived at by view, reached by view, resorting to views, speculation, conjecture, theory. METAPHYSICS ‘speculations on the nature of being, truth, and knowledge [POD]’. ‘... the science which investigates the first principles of nature and thought: ontology or the science of being: loosely and vaguely applied to anything abstruse, abstract, philosophical, subtle, transcendental, occult, supernatural, magical (Originally applied to those writings of Aristotle which in the accepted order came after (Greek *meta*) those dealing with natural science (*ta physika physis*, nature) [CTCD].’ ‘...part of philosophy which is concerned with understanding reality and developing theories about what exists and how we know that it exists [CCED].’

<sup>13</sup> REINCARNATION: belief that the soul enters a new (human or animal) body after death (OALD) (*re* (prefix) again; INCARNATE: Latin *in* in, *carnō*, *carnis* flesh)

<sup>14</sup> Please see The Buddha’s explanation above, p.29.

<sup>15</sup> M.II.iii.2 ‘*Aggi Vacchagotta-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Fire-Vacchagotta Sutta’)

trary to The Buddha's Teaching, he refused to listen, but clung obstinately to his own view, his own understanding, his own conceit.

When The Buddha heard of the matter, he summoned the bhikkhu Sāti, and asked him to explain himself.

(As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Exalted One, it is the same consciousness that rushes on runs about, not another.)

**What is that consciousness, Sāti?**

(Venerable Sir, it is that which speaks and feels and experiences here and there the result (*vipāka*) of good and bad kamma.)<sup>16</sup>

**To whom, useless man (*mogha-purisa*), have you ever known me to teach the Dhamma in that way? In many ways, useless man, have I not explained consciousness to be dependently arisen, since without a condition there is no origination of consciousness?**

The bhikkhu Sāti had The Buddha Him-Very-Self before him,<sup>17</sup> he had learned bhikkhus around him, and yet he raised his benighted head in their presence, and took his own benighted experience and reasoning as his measure of the Dhamma.<sup>18</sup> The Buddha explained to him the consequences of such conduct:

**But you, useless man, have misrepresented us by your wrong grasp, and injured yourself, and stored up much demerit (*a-puñña*); for this will lead to your harm and suffering for a long time.**

And then The Buddha said:

**What do you think, bhikkhus? Has this bhikkhu Sāti (son of a fisherman) kindled even a spark of wisdom in this Dhamma-Vinaya?** (How could he, Venerable Sir? No, Venerable Sir.)

The Dhamma is profound and appears profound. We are well-advised not to raise our heads and trust our own benighted experience; we are well-advised to trust the Teachings as they have been brought down to us from The Fully Enlightened Buddha. Let us then bow our heads, and listen with deference to The Buddha's explanation about consciousness to the foolish bhikkhu Sāti:

**...in many discourses have I stated consciousness to be dependently arisen, since without a condition there is no origination of consciousness.**

**...consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises.**

And The Buddha gave a simile:

<sup>16</sup> HERE AND THERE: this refers to what he thinks is the same consciousness in different incarnations, now in one realm, now another, etc.

<sup>17</sup> The Buddha explains: 'For a faithful disciple, bhikkhus, who is intent on fathoming the Teacher's Dispensation, it is proper that he conduct himself thus: 'The Blessed One is the Teacher, I am a disciple; the Blessed One knows, I do not know.' (M.II.ii.10 *'Kīṭāgiri-Suttam'* (Kīṭāgiri is a place)) After the Blessed One's passing away, the Teacher is the Dhamma-Vinaya that He left behind, namely the *Ti-Piṭaka* and Commentaries. Please see below footnote 85, p.260.

<sup>18</sup> The commentary explains that Sāti came to the conclusion that a persisting consciousness transmigrating from one existence to another is necessary to explain rebirth. It explains further that this view (eternity view) may arise when a bhikkhu hears The Buddha explain His past lives, because the bhikkhu's reasoning is faulty. It is the only way he can understand rebirth. For the inverse view (believing that since there is no soul, there can't be rebirth), please see above footnote 8, p.80. And for The Buddha's analysis of what happens when the bhikkhu does not consult his wiser and learned elders about the Dhamma (he does not know the watering place), please see below, p.107.

- [1] When fire burns dependent on logs, it is reckoned as a log fire;
- [2] when fire burns dependent on faggots, it is reckoned as a faggot fire;
- [3] when fire burns dependent on grass, it is reckoned as a grass fire;
- [4] when fire burns dependent on cowdung, it is reckoned as a cowdung fire;
- [5] when fire burns dependent on chaff, it is reckoned as a chaff fire;
- [6] when fire burns dependent on litter, it is reckoned as a litter fire.

This means that when there are no more logs, there is no more log fire: no more faggots, no more faggot fire, etc.

Then The Buddha explained:

So too, consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent on which it arises.

- [1] When consciousness arises dependent on the eye and colours, it is reckoned as eye consciousness;
- [2] when consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds, it is reckoned as ear consciousness;
- [3] when consciousness arises dependent on the nose and odours, it is reckoned as nose consciousness;
- [4] when consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and flavours, it is reckoned as tongue consciousness;
- [5] when consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches, it is reckoned as body consciousness;
- [6] when consciousness arises dependent on the mind and other things, it is reckoned as mind consciousness.<sup>19</sup>

This is very straightforward. If we attend to the colours of the sky, we see them; we do not hear the colours of the sky, do we? We do not see the sound of a song, or feel the flavour of coffee, do we?

- 1) When the colour of the sky (external base) strikes the eye (internal base), and we attend to it, an eye consciousness has arisen with eye contact.
- 2) When the sound of a tune (external base) strikes the ear (internal base), and we attend to it, an ear consciousness has arisen with ear contact.
- 3) When the smell of *Tiger Balm* (external base) strikes the nose (internal base), and we attend to it, a nose consciousness has arisen with nose contact.
- 4) When the flavour of coffee (external base) strikes the tongue (internal base), and we attend to it, a tongue consciousness has arisen with tongue contact.
- 5) When the hardness of the floor strikes our body as we sit here, and we attend to it, a body consciousness has arisen with body contact.
- 6a) When these five external bases strike upon their respective internal base, there is also a striking upon the mind base (internal base), a mind consciousness has arisen with mind contact.
- 6b) When a memory from our childhood (external base) strikes upon the mind (internal base), again a mind consciousness has arisen with mind contact.

When an external base strikes upon its internal base and there is attention, a consciousness has arisen: eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body- or mind consciousness. There has then arisen contact: eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, or mind contact. Five of the internal bases are matter (*rūpa*), the sixth is mind (*nāma*). Five

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<sup>19</sup> OTHER THINGS (*dhammā*): please see above p.71, and p.79.

of the external bases are matter (*rūpa*), the sixth is all other things (*dhammā*). Attention is mind (*nāma*), consciousness is mind (*nāma*), and contact is mind (*nāma*). We have thus:

- Mind-matter is the condition for the six bases,
- which are the condition for contact,
- which is the condition for sensation,
- which is the condition for perception,
- which is the condition for craving,
- which is the condition for clinging,
- which is the condition for coming-into-existence,
- which is the condition for birth,
- which is the condition for ageing&death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

When we no longer attend to a given object, no more consciousnesses arise dependent on that object. Thus, with no mind-matter, no six bases, no attention, no consciousness, no contact, no sensation, no perception, no craving, no clinging, no coming-into-existence, no birth, no ageing&death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

When there is consciousness, there is contact. And when there is contact, there is also sensation and perception.<sup>20</sup> These mind elements cannot be separated. It is explained by the Venerable Sāriputta:<sup>21</sup>

Sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*), friend: these states are conjoined, not disjoined, and it is impossible to separate each of these states from the others in order to describe the difference between them.

For what one senses, that one perceives, and what one perceives that one is conscious of.

Mind-matter (*nāma-rūpa*) is the condition for consciousness. Yet, The Buddha explains also that, the other way round, consciousness is the condition for mind-matter: like the mother is the condition for the child and the child is the condition for the mother (a child needs a mother to be conceived, and a woman needs to have conceived a child to be a mother), mind-matter and consciousness are conditions for each other. How is this?

The Buddha explained it very clearly to the Venerable Ānanda, in one great sutta on dependent origination: the '*Mahā Nidāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Causation Sutta').<sup>22</sup> Let us bow our heads then, and with deference listen to what the sutta says.

Once, the Venerable Ānanda had been meditating on dependent origination. (He was a stream-enterer, and by The Buddha praised for his great learning.) That day, he went to The Buddha and said:

It is wonderful, Venerable Sir, it is marvellous how profound this dependent origination is, and how profound it appears! And yet it appears to me as clear as clear!

<sup>20</sup> The Buddha explains this also with relation to the five aggregates. Please see also quotation above, footnote 18, p.69.

<sup>21</sup> M.I.v.3 '*Mahā-Vedalla-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Questions-and-Answers Sutta')

<sup>22</sup> D.ii.2 '*Mahā-Nidāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Causation Sutta')

What did The Buddha say to this? To the wise Venerable Ānanda? Did The Buddha say: ‘Yes, Ānanda, indeed! The Dhamma is easy! You are your own teacher: just trust your own experience, and it will all become clear as clear.’ No. Nowhere does The Buddha ever say such a thing.

When the Venerable Ānanda had said dependent origination was clear as clear to him, The Buddha’s response was quite other:

**Do not say so, Ānanda** (*ma hevaṃ avaca, Ānanda!*) **Do not say so, Ānanda** (*ma hevaṃ avaca, Ānanda!*)

**This dependent origination is profound** (*gambhīro*), **and appears profound** (*gambhīr-āvabhāso*).

**It is through not understanding, not penetrating this truth that the world has become like a tangled ball of thread, matted like a bird’s nest, tangled like reeds, unable to pass beyond the states of woe, the woeful destination, ruin, and the round of rebirth.**

The Buddha Himself says dependent origination is profound and appears profound. Our inability to understand that the origin of suffering is dependently originated is itself the origin of suffering, for it is ignorance. Hence, we should be well advised not to think dependent origination, where mind-matter is broken down into the individual elements, is merely an unnecessarily complicated and technical aspect of the Dhamma: The Buddha says it is the Dhamma:<sup>23</sup>

**Whoever sees dependent origination, sees the Dhamma; whoever sees the Dhamma, sees dependent origination.**

In other words: whoever does not see dependent origination, does not see the Dhamma; the Dhamma is profound, and appears profound. Let us then bow our heads and listen further to The Buddha’s explanation of the profound Dhamma, the dependently originated origin of suffering.

First The Buddha explained what He had also realized as the bodhisatta sitting under the Bodhi Tree: there is ageing&death only when there is birth, when there is coming-into-existence, when there is clinging, when there is craving, when there is sensation, when there is contact, and when there is mind-matter.<sup>24</sup> And then The Buddha said to the Venerable Ānanda:

**If, Ānanda, you are asked: ‘Has mind-matter a condition by which it exists?’ you should answer: ‘Yes.’**

**If asked: ‘What is the condition for mind-matter?’ you should answer:**

**‘Consciousness is the condition for mind-matter** (*viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṃ*), **and: ‘Mind-matter is the condition for consciousness** (*nāma-rūpa-paccayā viññāṇaṃ*).’

In other words, no consciousness, no mind-matter; no mind-matter, no consciousness.

The Venerable Sāriputta explains it with the famous simile of two sheaves of reeds:<sup>25</sup>

**Just as two sheaves of reeds might stand leaning against one another, so too, mind-matter is the condition for consciousness; consciousness is the condition for mind-matter....**

**If, friend, one were to remove one of those sheaves of reeds, the other would fall, and if one were to remove the other sheaf, the first would fall.**

<sup>23</sup> Quoted also above, p.67. (M.I.iii.8 ‘*Mahā-Hatthi-Padopama-Suttam*’ (‘Great Elephant’s Foot-print Sutta’))

<sup>24</sup> The Bodhisatta mentions also the six bases (please see above p. 70), here not mentioned by The Buddha, an omission the author considered immaterial to the present discussion. But please see them mentioned in quotation footnote 30, p.87.

<sup>25</sup> S.II.I.vii.7 ‘*Naḷa-Kalāpī-Suttam*’ (‘Reed Sheaves Sutta’)



**So too, with mind-matter's cessation, consciousness ceases; with consciousness's cessation, mind-matter ceases....**

The Buddha explained it by asking the Venerable Ānanda about birth. Please listen carefully.

First The Buddha explained that mind-matter depends on consciousness. He said to the Venerable Ānanda:

**I have said: 'Consciousness is the condition for mind-matter', and this is the way it should be understood.**

**If consciousness, Ānanda, were not to descend into the mother's womb, would mind-matter develop there?**

Now, when The Buddha speaks of consciousness descending into the womb, He does not mean that there is a consciousness hanging around somewhere in an intermediate state, waiting to descend: the Texts explain that this is merely the idiom.<sup>26</sup> It is the same as when we say 'I went to sleep', we do not mean that we went somewhere.<sup>27</sup> Consciousness descending into the womb means conception: the birth of a being.<sup>28</sup> Thus the Buddha's question to the Venerable Ānanda is, in other words: 'If no conception took place in the womb, would mind-matter develop there?' Or, 'If no conception took place, would the foetus's body with its five bases (eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue- and body base), and the foetus's sixth base (mind base) develop in the womb?' And, of course, the Venerable Ānanda's reply was: **(It would not, Venerable Sir).**<sup>29</sup>

No conception, no consciousness; no consciousness, no mind-matter; no mind-matter, no six bases. When a woman conceives, and her belly gets bigger and bigger and bigger, it is not merely inanimate matter that is growing in her womb like a vegetable: it is human matter possessed of consciousness, mind-matter.<sup>30</sup> It is a human being right from the start, with consciousness, sensation,

<sup>26</sup> The Commentary explains: '*Na okkamissathāti pavisitvā pavattamānaṃ viya paṭisandhivasena na vattissatha.* ('Were not to descend having entered', so to speak, and staying, by means of conception, were not to keep going on.) (translation from footnote by T.W.Rhys Davids in the PTS translation of this sutta (*Dialogues of The Buddha II*)).

<sup>27</sup> The example of *going to sleep* is taken from PED's explanation of *okkamati* (to descend).

<sup>28</sup> The Buddha explains birth: 'The birth of the various beings into the various orders of beings, their being born, descent (*okkanti*), production, the appearance of the aggregates, the acquisition of the sense bases. This is called birth.' Quoted also above, p.26. Please see also His explanation of descent into the womb, footnote 30, p.87.

<sup>29</sup> The Buddha explains the gradual development of the embryo [explanation of Pali terms from commentary]: 'First there is the *kalala* [size of a drop of oil placed on the tip of a thread made from three strands of wool]. From the *kalala* comes the *abbuda* [colour of meat-washing water]; from the *abbuda* the *pesī* is produced [similar to molten tin [subcommentary: but pink]]; from the *pesī* the *ghana* arises [shape of a chicken's egg]; from the *ghana* emerge the limbs [five pimples appear, the rudiments of the arms, legs and head], the head-hair, body-hair, and nails [at 42nd week]. And whatever food the mother eats (the meals and beverages that she consumes), by this the man (*naro*) inside the mother's womb is maintained. (S.I.X.1 '*Indaka-Suttam*' (Indaka is the name of The Buddha's interlocutor.))

<sup>30</sup> Thus, in A.III.II.1 '*Tith-Āyatana-Suttam*' ('Sectarian Doctrines Sutta'), The Buddha explains: 'Based on the six elements [earth, water, fire, air, space, consciousness], there is descent into the womb. Such descent taking place, there is mind-matter. With mind-matter as condition, there are the six bases; with the six bases as condition, there is contact; with contact as condition, there is feeling.'

perception, etc. This is known now even by Western science. And we can verify it in our meditation by going back to the moment of our birth, to see what was there.

Then The Buddha asked the Venerable Ānanda:

**Or if consciousness, Ānanda, having descended into the mother's womb, were to turn away, would mind-matter come to birth in this life?**

Here, The Buddha's question is, in other words: 'If the consciousness that arose in the womb at conception were to cease, if there was death, and the next consciousness were to arise somewhere else, would there be what we call birth of that human being?'<sup>31</sup> And here again, the Venerable Ānanda's reply was: **(It would not, Venerable Sir.)**

No consciousness, no mind-matter. An example of this is when a woman conceives, and yet the human being that is born dies, and she miscarries. Sometimes she does not even know that she has conceived and miscarried, sometimes she knows it, and sometimes she even deliberately kills the conscious human being in her womb.

And then The Buddha asked:

**And if the consciousness, Ānanda, of one only young, of a boy or of a girl, were thus cut off, would mind-matter grow, develop and mature?**

The Buddha's question here is, in other words: 'If the boy or girl, either in the womb or after delivery, were to die, would his or her mind-matter come to full development?'<sup>32</sup> And here too, of course, the Venerable Ānanda's reply was: **(It would not, Venerable Sir.)**

No consciousness, no mind-matter. This is, for example, when a woman either by accident or deliberately aborts the child, or when the child dies at delivery, or even later in its childhood.

Then The Buddha summarized his explanation:

**Therefore, Ānanda, just this, namely consciousness, is the root, the causation, the origin, the cause of mind-matter.**

In other words, the consciousness that has arisen at conception is the condition for the appearance of mind-matter, which is in other words, the appearance

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<sup>31</sup> The Commentary explains: 'to turn away (*vokkamati*)' means that it by death (*cutivasena*) perishes (*nirujjhissatha*). And, in detail, it explains that the rebirth-linking consciousness arises, persists, and ceases. At each stage, there arises also heart base-, body-, and sex matter (three types of kamma-produced decad-kalāpas = thirty types of matter, lasting seventeen mind-moments). Afterwards, there arise, persist, and cease sixteen life-continuum consciousnesses, at each stage of which there also arise the three kinds of matter. If, however, the matter that arises at the arising and persisting of the rebirth-linking consciousness is insufficiently strong to support further production of mind-matter (= five aggregates), the consciousness that arises at the seventeenth mind-moment is a death consciousness: that means the consciousness 'turns away'. If this is not the case, there arises at the seventeenth mind-moment also a life-continuum consciousness, and then the first cognitive-process of that life, a mind-door cognitive-process, which takes as object the rebirth-linking consciousness.

<sup>32</sup> As an example of the factors of dependent origination in operation, The Buddha analyses the growth, development and maturing of a child's mind-matter according to the principle of dependent origination in M.I.iv.8 '*Mahā-Taṇhā-Saṅkhaya-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Craving-Destruction Sutta').

of the five aggregates, the acquisition of the six bases.<sup>33</sup> That is what The Buddha calls birth (*jāti*).<sup>34</sup>

The Buddha's explanation to the Venerable Ānanda was about a human birth, but the principle applies to all birth. If the consciousness arises in a human womb, we will develop the mind-matter of a human being; if it arises in a hen's womb, we will develop the mind-matter of a chicken; and if it arises in the deva world (where one is not conceived in a womb, but is reborn spontaneously and complete), we will have the mind-matter of a deva, etc.<sup>35</sup>

Having explained that mind-matter depends on consciousness, The Buddha then explained that conversely consciousness also depends on mind-matter:

**I have said: 'Mind-matter is the condition for consciousness', and this is the way it should be understood.**

**If consciousness, Ānanda, did not take foundation in mind-matter (*nāma-rūpe-pa-tiṭṭham na labhis-satha*),<sup>36</sup> would there then be an arising and coming-into-existence of birth, ageing, death and suffering?**

Here, The Buddha's question is, in other words: 'If there was no consciousness in mind-matter, if it was merely inanimate matter growing in the womb like a vegetable, would there be a human being who came to birth, grew, became a human child, youth, adult, and grew sick, grew old, and eventually died?' The Venerable Ānanda's answer was again, of course: **(There would not, Venerable Sir.)**<sup>37</sup>

And then The Buddha concluded:

<sup>33</sup> This is in the case of a human birth. For other cases, please see above regarding fine-material and immaterial coming-into-existence, p.45.

<sup>34</sup> D.II.9 *'Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna-Suttam'* ('Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta'): '...the appearance of the aggregates, the acquisition of the bases, that, bhikkhus, is called birth'. Passage quoted in full above p.26.

<sup>35</sup> For The Buddha's detailed explanation of birth as a factor of dependent origination, please see below p.101.

<sup>36</sup> In this same sutta, The Buddha speaks subsequently of rebirth into conscious existence also as seven foundations of consciousness (*satta viññāṇa-tṭhiti*), and speaks also of rebirth into two spheres of unconscious existence (the seven foundations of conscious existence are also at A.VII.v.1 *Satta-Viññāṇa-Tṭhiti-Suttam'* ('Seven Consciousness-Foundations Sutta')) This He explains also in connection with the condition for birth, namely coming-into-existence: the 'planting' (foundation) of the seed (consciousness). Please see quotation above, p.48.

<sup>37</sup> Here, the author mentioned that owing to the modern dogma of political rights and equality (which denies dependent origination, and champions the doctrine of self (*atta vāda*)), as well as owing to the view of materialism and sensualism, the moral premise upon which abortion has in many modern, progressive and supposedly scientifically enlightened societies been legalized is the scientifically absurd claim that conception does not involve mind-matter with consciousness. In the debates on the popular media, however, and in the equally popular parliaments, no explanation has been forthcoming, let alone demanded, as to exactly when and under what circumstances the consciousness that eventually cannot be denied to exist even in the womb enters the 'vegetable' that is growing in the womb. This moral blundering is conveniently pushed aside in favour of a discussion on unrelated matters such as the rights of the mother over her own mind-matter and consciousness (the baby's mind-matter and consciousness is impossibly the mother's): another manifestation of the view of self. For The Buddha's discussion of this fallacy with the conceited young sophist Saccaka, please see above p.32ff. For a description of abortion in the Pali Texts, please see above p.24, and for the self-hatred and subsequent confusion that attends the act of deliberate abortion, please see above p.61ff.

Therefore, Ānanda, just this, namely mind-matter, is the root, the causation, the origin, the cause for consciousness.

Thus far then, Ānanda, go birth and decay, death and falling into other states and being reborn; thus far extends the way of designations, of concepts; thus far is the sphere of understanding; thus far the round [of rebirth] goes as much as can be discerned in this life, namely to mind-matter together with consciousness.

This is very straightforward. Within the same life, it is impossible to go back further than to mind-matter together with consciousness. A life begins with the arising of the rebirth consciousness (the first consciousness in the mother's womb) together with mind-matter, and the life ends with the passing-away of the death consciousness (the last consciousness) and mind-matter. The corpse that is left is matter alone, without mind, without consciousness: just refuse<sup>38</sup> matter.<sup>39</sup>

In between the rebirth consciousness and death consciousness, there is nothing other than a continuum of eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body- and mind consciousnesses one after another. In just one second, billions of consciousnesses arise, persist and pass away, one after another, and each consciousness has its own object. We never stop grasping an object: like the monkey roaming through the forest, grabbing one branch after another, our roaming in *samsāra* is grabbing one object after another.<sup>40</sup>

When we attain Nibbāna, there is also a consciousness that directly knows and sees Nibbāna, and there will be consciousnesses that know we knew and saw Nibbāna. But when we pass into Parinibbāna, the death consciousness that marks the end of that life arises, persists and passes away, and no rebirth consciousness follows: not in this world, not in another world, not anywhere. At the death of a Buddha and arahant, there is no further rebirth: no more arising of consciousness means no more rebirth.

This we see, for example, in The Buddha's own words about His knowledge of arahantship:<sup>41</sup>

**'This is the last birth** (*ayam-antimā jāti*). **Now there is no further coming-into-existence** (*n-atth-idāni pu-na-bbhavo*):'

Seeking one's last birth, putting an end to further coming-into-existence, which would be renewal of suffering, is the sole reason why Buddhas arise in the world, rediscover the Dhamma, and teach it.

Mind-matter is the condition for consciousness, and consciousness is the condition for mind-matter: is that, then, as far as the Origin of Suffering goes? No. As The Buddha just explained to the Venerable Ānanda, mind-matter together with consciousness is **as far as can be discerned in this life** (*itth-attam*).

<sup>38</sup> REFUSE: what is rejected or left as worthless or not wanted

<sup>39</sup> These very convenient and accurate designations are used in the Texts: rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi citta*); death consciousness (*cuti citta*). Please see, e.g. Ads.iii 'Kicca Saṅgaha' ('Function Compendium').

<sup>40</sup> For the monkey simile, please see above p.76.

<sup>41</sup> S.V.XII.ii.1 'Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttam' ('Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta'). This description The Buddha gives for all arahants, as in D.i.2 'Sāmañña-Phala-Suttam' ('The Fruits of Asceticism').

But is it possible to go further back? Is it necessary? Yes, it is indeed necessary, for to understand the origin of suffering, we need to understand why the rebirth consciousness arises, and we need to understand why it arises in an existence as a deva, as a human being, as an animal or being in hell. We need to understand these things, and eventually see them directly through our meditation. We need not only to understand the obvious, which is that the condition for the first consciousness in a life can be found only in a previous life, we need eventually also to see directly how our human rebirth consciousness descended into our mother's womb owing to a condition in a previous life.

That will be the starting-point of our next Dhamma talk, the fourth Dhamma talk on the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, the Second Noble Truth.

Please allow me to close this talk with The Buddha's analysis of what happens if we neglect study of the Dhamma, study of the profound Texts:<sup>42</sup>

**The man of little learning ages like an ox. His flesh grows; his wisdom does not grow.**


Perhaps today, our wisdom will have grown a bit.

Thank you.

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<sup>42</sup> This verse is quoted also above, p.76. (Dhp.xi.7 '*Jarā Vagga*' ('Ageing Chapter'))

Today's talk is the last of four on the origin of birth, ageing&death, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*Dukkha-Samudayaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ*), the Second Noble Truth: dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*).

Let us today begin by asking ourselves the big questions, the questions asked by Man throughout the ages: 'Who am I?' 'What am I?' 'What is Man?' These questions have given rise to much speculation, much confusion, much longing, and much suffering throughout history. Many a philosopher, and many a poet have racked their brains, and written pages and pages and pages, even tomes<sup>1</sup> about these questions. Go to the library of any good university, and see shelves and shelves of books, , old and even ancient, trying to answer questions about Man.

Once too, a bhikkhu called Samiddhi asked The Buddha such questions. He asked:<sup>2</sup>

**Venerable Sir, it is said, 'Man (*satto*), Man (*satto*)'.<sup>3</sup>**

**In what way could there be, Venerable Sir, Man or an explanation of Man?**

And The Buddha explained:

**Where there is the eye (*cakkhu*), Samiddhi, where there are sights (*rūpā*), eye consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa*), things to be cognized by eye consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa-viññātabbā dhammā*), there is Man or an explanation of Man.**

**Where there is the ear... the nose... the tongue... the body... the mind, where there are other things (*dhammā*),<sup>4</sup> mind consciousness, things to be cognized by the mind consciousness, there is Man or an explanation of Man.**

'What is this?', we may ask. How about 'Me!' And we do not understand, we get confused and bewildered. We may even not want to understand, for we may become afraid. And conceit may arise: 'Why all these dry and technical explanations? Is this really necessary?' The swelled head may swell even further: 'The Dhamma is very easy to understand!' 'These technical explanations just make the Dhamma difficult to understand: it is completely unnecessary!' 'Why not be a little more relaxed, friendly and accommodating?' And the swelling may continue even further: 'Is this the true voice of The Buddha: the original Buddha? I don't think so!' 'Where is His smile? His heart?' We think The Buddha is just a friendly chap, who tells good stories, laughs, cracks jokes, pats us on the head, and says everything is in fact all right: 'Just be happy, do good, but do not be attached to it, and smile.' When we hold such a view, and accept such a teaching, we lose faith in the True Dhamma: we do not seek the True Dhamma, and learn it.<sup>5</sup>

Once there was a wanderer called Vacchagotta. He had gained faith in The Buddha. And then he introduced his own view of things. When The Buddha

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<sup>1</sup> TOME: a large, heavy book, especially a scholarly or serious one. (OALD)

<sup>2</sup> S.IV.I.i.2 'Samiddhi-Satta-Pañhā-Suttaṃ' ('Samiddhi Man-Question Sutta')

<sup>3</sup> SATTO: this may also be translated as 'being' or 'creature'.

<sup>4</sup> OTHER THINGS (*dhammā*): please see above p.71, and p.79.

<sup>5</sup> For a description of such easy Dhamma, please see below, p.287.

told him his views were inapplicable to the Dhamma, Vacchagotta lost faith, and declared bewilderment and confusion.<sup>6</sup> The Buddha's reply was:<sup>7</sup>

**It is enough to cause you bewilderment, Vaccha, enough to cause you confusion.**

**For this Dhamma, Vaccha, is profound (*gambhīro*), hard to see (*duddaso*), and hard to understand (*durānubodho*), peaceful (*santo*), and sublime (*paṇīto*), unattainable by mere reasoning (*atakk-āvacaro*), subtle (*nipuṇo*), to be experienced by the wise (*pañña-vedaniyo*).**

**It is hard for you to understand it when you hold another view, accept another teaching, approve of another teaching, pursue a different training, and follow a different teacher.**

As The Buddha makes very clear, The Dhamma is highly undemocratic: only The Buddha's Teaching is the Dhamma, and it can be understood only by an élite, the wise. Whenever we try to democratize the Dhamma, and accommodate it to the benighted views of the majority (the unwise), it ceases to be the Dhamma. Why? Because it is not the Dhamma that needs to be accommodated to benighted views; it is benighted views that need to be accommodated to the Dhamma: till they are the Right View (*Sammā Dīṭṭhi*) that is the Dhamma. Hence, we need to follow The Buddha, we need to accept The Buddha's Teaching, approve of The Buddha's Teaching, and pursue the training The Buddha laid down. The Buddha explains:<sup>8</sup>

**This is the only path: there is no other for the purification of insight.**

**Walk this path, and you will bewilder Māra.**

The only path, the only track, is the Dhamma, the Dhamma Path (*Dhamma-Pada*), the Dhamma Track. And we need to have a one-track mind, on the Dhamma track, The Buddha's Word. Otherwise, we will bewilder not Māra but ourselves.

The Dhamma is dependent origination,<sup>9</sup> which is profound, hard to see, and hard to understand. With sufficiently good concentration and meditative skill, we may discern ultimate mind-matter of past, present and future lives, and directly see and understand dependent origination: at our enlightenment. Until then, we are well advised carefully, and with deference to study and learn dependent origination: the Teachings of The Buddha. That is what The Buddha calls the noble disciple's **treasure of learning** (*suta-dhanaṃ*).<sup>10</sup> He explains:

**And what is the treasure of learning?**

**The noble disciple has learned much, remembers what he has learned, and consolidates what he has learned.**

**Such teachings as are lovely in the beginning, lovely in the middle, and lovely in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing, and as affirm a holy life that is utterly perfect and pure: such teachings as these he has learned much of, remembered, recited, investigated, and penetrated well by view. This is called the treasure of learning.**

<sup>6</sup> Further to puzzlement over the Dhamma, please see below The Buddha's explanation of 'He Does not Know the Watering Place', p.107.

<sup>7</sup> M.II.iii.2 '*Aggi-Vacchagotta-Suttam*' ('Fire-Vacchagotta Sutta')

<sup>8</sup> Dh.p.xx.2 '*Magga Vagga*' ('Path Chapter')

<sup>9</sup> For the equation between the Dhamma dependent origination, please see The Buddha's explanation above, p.67.

<sup>10</sup> The Buddha gives seven treasures: the faith treasure (*saddhā-dhanaṃ*), virtue- (*sīla*), conscientiousness- (*hīri*), fear-of-blame- (*ottappa*), learning- (*suta*), generosity- (*cāga*), and wisdom treasure (*pañña-dhanaṃ*) (A.VII.i.6 '*Vitthata Dhana-Suttam*' ('Detailed Treasure Sutta')). Please see also footnote 78, below p. 105.

Do you wish to become noble disciples? If you do, please never forget that if we think the Dhamma is easy, we can be sure we have not understood the Dhamma at all. The Buddha explains:<sup>11</sup>

**‘This is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.’ Such has been made known by Me. In the statement, ‘This is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering’, there are innumerable nuances, innumerable elucidations, innumerable illustrations.**

Let us then pick up where we left off last time: The Buddha’s explanation of dependent origination to the Venerable Ānanda.<sup>12</sup> The Buddha explained that mind-matter is the condition for consciousness, and consciousness is itself the condition for mind-matter; which is the condition for contact, for sensation, for perception, for craving, for clinging, for coming-into-existence, for birth, and for ageing&death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. And The Buddha explained that one can in one life go only so far as mind-matter and consciousness:<sup>13</sup>

**Therefore, Ānanda, just this, namely mind-matter, is ... the origin, the cause for consciousness.**

- **Thus far then, Ānanda, go birth and decay, death and falling into other states and being reborn;**
- **thus far extends the way of designation, of concepts;**
- **thus far is the sphere of understanding;**
- **thus far the round [of rebirth] goes as much as can be discerned in this life, namely to mind-matter together with consciousness.**

All this, the bodhisatta realized as he sat under the Bodhi Tree,<sup>14</sup> and we have discussed the nine questions he asked himself, according to which he realized the first ten factors of dependent origination.<sup>15</sup> But he went also beyond this life, and asked a further tenth question:

**‘With what, is there consciousness (*viññāṇa*)? What is the condition for consciousness?’**

And he realized:

**‘Formation is the condition for consciousness (*saṅkhāra-paccayā viññāṇam*).’<sup>16</sup>**

The Buddha explains formation (*saṅkhāra*):<sup>17</sup>

**There are these three kinds of formation:**

- [1] the bodily formation (*kāya-saṅkhāro*),**
- [2] the verbal formation (*vacī-saṅkhāro*),**
- [3] the mental formation (*citta-saṅkhāro*).<sup>18</sup>**

<sup>11</sup> S.V.XII.ii.9 ‘*Saṅ-kāsana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Illustration Sutta’)

<sup>12</sup> D.ii.2 ‘*Mahā-Nidāna-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Great Causation Sutta’). Please see above p.84ff.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> S.II.I.i.10 ‘*Gotama-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Gotama Sutta’)

<sup>15</sup> For the Bodhisatta’s questions 1-4, please see above ‘Is There Life on Mars?’ p.39ff; for his questions 5-9, please see above ‘One Thing after Another’, p. 65ff.

<sup>16</sup> *SANĀHĀRA*: corresponds in this context exactly to the English formation. It can mean forming as in the English formation (uncountable noun); and it can mean thing formed as in the English a formation (singular)/formations (plural) (countable noun).

<sup>17</sup> S.II.I.i.2 ‘*Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Analysis Sutta’)

<sup>18</sup> In S.IV.vii.6 ‘*Dutiya Kāmaḥhū-Suttaṃ*’ (the sutta is a discussion between a layman Citta and a Venerable Kāmaḥhū), the Venerable Kāmaḥhū speaks also of these three formations: bodily-formation (*kāya-saṅkhāro*) (as in&out breathing), verbal-formation (*vacī-saṅkhāro*) (as initial and sus-



Formation (*saṅkhāra*) means several things in the Dhamma.<sup>19</sup> Discussing the recollection of one's five aggregates of past lives, The Buddha explains the most common, general meaning:<sup>20</sup>

**And why, bhikkhus, do you call them formations?**

**They perform the formation (*saṅkhatam-abhi-saṅkharonti*)...**

**They perform matter formation as matter... sensation formation as sensation... perception formation as perception... formations formation as formations... they perform consciousness formation as consciousness.**

*Saṅkhāra* refers thus to the thing that is formed, and to the formation of the thing. For example, the cup of coffee we discussed in an earlier talk:<sup>21</sup> the conditions for a cup of coffee are coffee-powder, a cup and boiling water. Those three things perform the 'formation' of a cup of coffee. But they are themselves also formations. The formation of coffee powder, for example, is performed by the formation of coffee beans, the formation of picking, drying and roasting them, and grinding them to powder. The formation of the coffee beans was performed by coffee bushes; the formation of the coffee bush was performed by a coffee seed, together with the formations of soil, water and sunlight, etc.

All things in the world are formations be they mental or material, and the formation is performed dependent on conditions: without the right conditions,

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tained application of thought), and mental formation (*citta-saṅkhāro*) (as perception and sensation). The student of the Dhamma should beware of confusing these two explanations, merely because the Pali terms are the same: the Venerable Kāmaḥū is not speaking of dependent origination, but of the cessation-attainment, where these three formations cease (please see the commentary). Since it is not the arahant's Parinibbāna, the arahant may emerge from this attainment, and the three formations again become operative. The Venerable Kāmaḥū explains that the condition for this is the arahant's still operative life faculty (sustained by past kamma formation). Were one to confuse these three formations with the three formations that are the condition for consciousness, the confusion and possible misrepresentation would indeed be serious. Why? Because the confused reading would mean that in&out breathing, initial and sustained application of thought, and perception and sensation are the condition for consciousness. In that case, a consciousnesses of the second-, third- and fourth jhānas, as well as of the four immaterial-jhānas would impossibly arise, for they are without initial and sustained application of thought; the consciousnesses of the fourth jhāna and four immaterial-jhānas would further impossibly arise, for they are unaccompanied by in&out breath; a foetus in the womb would be without consciousness, for it has no in&out breath; there being no consciousness, there would also be no mind-matter, meaning no six bases would form, meaning womb-born rebirth would be an impossibility; beings and coming-into-existence in the Brahmā worlds would also be impossible, for there is no in&out breath either; and the arahant who in the attainment of cessation would furthermore impossibly emerge from the attainment, since the alleged conditions for his returning to consciousness would be absent: in that case the attainment of cessation would be equal to one's Parinibbāna, which (as just explained) it is not. The further ramifications of such confusion do not bear mentioning. For the same details with regard to the attainment of cessation, please see also M.I.v.3 '*Mahā-Vedalla-Suttam*' ('Great Questions&Answers Sutta'), and M.I.v.4 '*Cūḷa-Vedalla-Suttam*' ('Small Questions&Answers Sutta'). And for the same and more details in an extended explanation by The Buddha (where He explains also a further nine kinds of formation), please see S.IV.II.ii.1 '*Rahogata-Suttam*' ('Solitude Sutta'). For why such confusion and misrepresentation may and does arise, please see also below, 'He Does Not Know the Watering Place', p.107.

<sup>19</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of the meanings of *saṅkhāra*, please see Vis.xvii PoP.44-47 '*Paññā-Bhūmi-Niddesa*' ('Wisdom-Soil Description').

<sup>20</sup> S.III.I.II.iii.7 '*Khajjanīya-Suttam*' ('Being Devoured Sutta')

<sup>21</sup> For a description of conditionality by way of a cup of coffee, please see above p.65ff.

the formation of that thing does not take place. (No coffee powder, no cup of coffee, or no boiling water, no cup of coffee, or no cup, no cup of coffee.)

Hence, we may understand that dependent origination describes the conditions necessary for the performing of formations: all the factors of dependent origination are formations that perform the formation of further formations, including the formation that performs the formation of consciousness. Nibbāna, however, is not a formation, it is not dependently originated: it is unformed (*a-saṅkhatā*).<sup>22</sup> This is the general meaning of the term *saṅkhāra*, and most often The Buddha uses the term in this sense.

When The Buddha uses the word *saṅkhāra* as a factor of dependent origination, however, although it also means formation in the general sense, it means formation of a particular kind: when The Buddha speaks of *saṅkhāra* as a factor of dependent origination, He is using it in a special sense. The Buddha explains it in a sutta of that very name: the ‘Formation Sutta’ (*‘Saṅkhāra-Suttaṃ’*). There, He explains how one is reborn (*upapannaṃ*) into a certain world (*loka*) in accordance with how one performs (*abhi-saṅkharoti*) the three kinds of formation (*saṅkhāra*):<sup>23</sup>

**Here, bhikkhus, someone ... having performed**

[1] **harmful bodily formation** (*kāya-saṅkhāraṃ*)...

[2] **harmful verbal formation** (*vacī-saṅkhāraṃ*)...

[3] **harmful mental formation** (*mano-saṅkhāraṃ*)...<sup>24</sup>

**is reborn in a harmful world.**

Then The Buddha analyses it according to the principle of dependent origination:

**When he is reborn in a harmful world, harmful contacts (*phassā*) touch him.**

**Being touched by harmful contacts, he experiences harmful sensation (*vedanaṃ*), wholly suffering, as is the case of beings in hell.**

And The Buddha explains that if the formation one has performed is harmless, one is reborn in a harmless world, such as are the beings in one of the higher deva worlds; if the formation one has performed is both harmful and harmless, one is reborn in a harmful and harmless world, such as are beings in the human world, in some of the deva worlds, the animal world, and the ghost world.<sup>25</sup>

The Buddha summarizes this explanation to an ascetic Puṇṇa, by referring

<sup>22</sup> Please see footnote 10, p. 67, and His explanation below, p.255.

<sup>23</sup> A.III.I.iii.3 ‘*Saṅkhāra-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Formation Sutta’)

<sup>24</sup> Here, mental formation is *MANO-saṅkhāra*, whereas above (The Buddha’s explanation of the three kinds of formation), it was *CITTA saṅkhāra*: as quoted above p.76, they are synonyms (S.II.I.vii.1 ‘*A-ssutavā-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Unlearned Sutta’)), which becomes clear also in the further discussion of this sutta. Also in A.IV.IV.iii.1 ‘*Cetanā-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Volition Sutta’), The Buddha explains that when one performs (*abhi-saṅkharoti*) bodily- (*kāya*-), verbal- (*vacī*-), or mental formation (*MANO-saṅkhāraṃ*), there arise happiness or suffering (*sukha-dukkha*) (= pleasant/unpleasant sensation = harmless/harmful sensation: born of contact). Please see further footnote 50, below p.100, and footnote 65, below p.103.

<sup>25</sup> For these five destinations, please see The Buddha’s explanation above, p.44. For the relationship between kamma and the coming-into-existence of consciousness at a particular destination, please see His explanation quoted above, p. 48, as well as the explanation quoted footnote 36, on the same page.

explicitly to kamma:<sup>26</sup>

**Therefore, Puṇṇa, a being's rebirth is owing to a being** (*bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti hoti*): **one is reborn according to what one has done...**

**Thus, Puṇṇa, 'Beings are heirs to their kamma', do I declare** (*'Kamma-dāyādā sattā'ti, vadāmi*).

This is very straightforward. The Buddha explained that a being performs kamma, and at death, that being's kamma is responsible for the rebirth of another being.<sup>27</sup> Let us take, for example, The Buddha's just mentioned explanation of the results that arise from a human being performing bad kamma, harmful formation (*saṅkhāra*):<sup>28</sup>

- Consciousness (*viññāṇa*): owing to his harmful formation, his rebirth consciousness arises in an unhappy destination: he is reborn in a harmful world.
- Mind-matter (*nāma-rūpa*): his rebirth consciousness arises together with mind-matter, taking the form perhaps of a hell-being.
- Six bases (*saḷ-āyatana*): owing to the hell-being's mind-matter and consciousness, there are the six bases of a hell-being.
- Contact (*phasso*): owing to the six bases of a hell-being, he is touched by hellish sights, sounds, odours, flavours, touches and other things: harmful contacts.
- Sensation (*vedanā*): owing to the hellish contacts, he experiences hellish sensations: harmful sensation; which is wholly suffering (*dukkha*).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> M.II.i.7 '*Kukkura-Vatika-Suttaṃ*' ('Dog-Duty Ascetic Sutta'). Here, The Buddha gives the same explanation as in the previously quoted 'Formation Sutta', but there, He does not give this summary. Here, He refers to the three kinds of harmful formation (*saṅkhārā*) as 'dark kamma (*kammaṃ kaṇham*)', and the harmless as 'bright kamma (*kammaṃ sukkaṃ*)'.

<sup>27</sup> The Buddha gives the same explanation in terms of merit (*puñṇā*): 'If of ignorance disposed (*avijjā-gato*), bhikkhus, a person performs a meritorious formation (*puñṇā-ābhisankhāraṃ*), consciousness (*viññāṇam*) fares on to the meritorious; if he performs a demeritorious formation (*a-puñṇā-ābhisankhāraṃ*), consciousness fares on to the demeritorious; if he performs an imperturbable formation (*āneñj-ābhisankhāraṃ*), consciousness fares on to the imperturbable [formation of the immaterial jhānas, by which there is rebirth in the immaterial realm].' Please see The Buddha's explanation M.III.i.6 '*Āneñjasappāya-Suttaṃ*' ('To the Imperturbable Sutta'). The arahant, however, having abandoned ignorance, does not perform any whatsoever formation, which means at death no consciousness is discerned...: 'mere bodily remains will be left.' (Please see quotation from this same sutta, above footnote 56, p.37.) (S.II.I.vi.1 '*Pari-Vīmaṃsana-Suttaṃ*' ('Thorough Investigation Sutta'))

<sup>28</sup> This same procedure The Buddha explains also in S.II.I.iii.5 '*Bhūmija-Suttaṃ*' ('The Bhūmija Sutta'): 'The body (*kāye*), Ānanda, there being (*sati*), there arises internal happiness and pain rooted in bodily volition (*kāya-sañcetanā-hetu*); or speech (*vācāya*)... there being, there arises internal happiness and pain rooted in verbal volition (*vacī-sañcetanā-hetu*); or the mind (*mane*)... there being, there arises internal happiness and pain rooted in mental volition (*mano-sañcetanā-hetu*); and because of ignorance (*avijjā-paccayā ca*).' Here again, *mano-sañcetanā* = *citta-saṅkhāra* of dependent origination.

<sup>29</sup> The Buddha explains: 'A person with wrong view, -intention, -speech, -action, -livelihood, -effort, -mindfulness, -concentration, -knowledge, and -liberation: whatsoever body-kamma [speech-, mind-] that is in accordance with that view is accomplished and undertaken, and any volitions... determinations... aspiration... formations (*saṅkhārā*); all these things (*dhammā*) lead to the unwanted, to the undesired, to the unwelcome, to harm, and to suffering.' (A.X.III.i.4 '*Bjja-Suttaṃ*' ('Seed Sutta'))

As we can see, The Buddha explained only the results of harmful formation: there is no mention of the causes for formation of new kamma.

We have thus five resultant formations in one life: consciousness, mind-matter, six bases, contact and sensation. In other words, birth, ageing&death in one life. But owing to ignorance, craving, clinging, and coming-into-existence, the hell-being cannot avoid performing new kamma, which is new formation: until there is arahantship, there will always be ignorance, craving and clinging. They are the condition for the performance of kamma, which is the condition for perpetuated rebirth.<sup>30</sup> They are the five causal formations that are the conditions for new resultant formations in future lives.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, when The Buddha says beings are heirs to their kamma, He is saying that beings are dependently originated.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> The Buddha explains: ‘When ignorant, one attains to an existence connected with either merit (*puñña*) or demerit (*apuñña*).’ A.VI.vi.9 ‘*Nibbhedika-Suttam*’ (‘Penetrating Sutta’)

<sup>31</sup> For the relationship between resultant formations and causal formations (kamma), please see The Buddha’s explanation of the conditions for coming-into-existence above, p.46, and Table 3 below, p.98.

<sup>32</sup> The Buddha is not in reality suggesting that one being performs kamma, and another being experiences the results. As discussed earlier, that is wrong view, and according to His explanation in the beginning of this talk, a being is nothing other than the eye, sights, eye consciousness, ear, sounds, ear consciousness, etc. But, when The Buddha explains the Dhamma as suttas, He employs both conventional language and ultimate language: according to how His listeners will understand it best. He may thus speak of a being as well as of the eye, sights, eye consciousness, etc.: some listeners understand one way, some another way, some both ways. The author mentioned also that we have received the suttas second-hand. They were spoken to people of less developed delusion: they knew things that (owing to his ‘scientific’, materialist views) ~~Man~~ Man does not know and not accept. We need therefore to beware of taking refuge in our own be-nightment, conceit and unfaith, and with them as condition to jump to hasty, unwise conclusions about the Pali Texts, merely because they appear unclear or incoherent to our ill-trained or un-trained mind. Such conduct has led also to a veritable cult of doubt about the veracity of the Pali Texts with much serious misrepresentation (for the result of such conduct, please see above p. 82): so-called academically founded doubt is no less doubt than academically unfounded doubt: doubt does not lead to enlightenment. For doubt as a nutriment of ignorance, please see below, p.105, and for the criteria by which to decide the authenticity of Texts, please see below, Appendix IV, ‘Is This the Dhamma-Vinaya?’, 281ff.

Birth, Ageing&Death from Past to Present to Future Life

(one life) 2 <sup>ND</sup> PAST LIFE	(next life) 1 <sup>ST</sup> PAST LIFE		(next life) PRESENT LIFE		(next life) 1 <sup>ST</sup> FUTURE LIFE		(next life) 2 <sup>ND</sup> FUTURE LIFE	
5 past » causes	5 past » results	5 past » causes	5 present » results	5 present » causes	5 future » results	5 future » causes	5 future » results	5 future » causes
ignorance formation	consciousness mind-matter six bases contact	ignorance formation	consciousness mind-matter six bases contact	ignorance formation	consciousness mind-matter six bases contact	ignorance formation	consciousness mind-matter six bases contact	ignorance formation
craving clinging coming-into- existence	sensation	craving clinging coming-into- existence	sensation	craving clinging coming-into- existence	sensation	craving clinging coming-into- existence	sensation	craving clinging coming-into- existence
	birth ageing&death » *		birth ageing&death » *		birth ageing&death » *		birth ageing&death » *	

1st life	5 causes	» 2nd life	5 results & 5 causes	» 3rd life	5 results	= (4x5) 20 factors
one life	(5 causes)	» next life	(5 results and 5 causes)	» next life	(5 results)	= 20 factors
2nd past life	(5 causes)	» 1st past life	(5 results and 5 causes)	» present life	(5 results)	= 20 factors
1st past life	(5 causes)	» present life	(5 results and 5 causes)	» 1st future life	(5 results)	= 20 factors
present life	(5 causes)	» 1st future life	(5 results and 5 causes)	» 2nd future life	(5 results)	= 20 factors

Our formation of kamma is responsible for the quality and place of our future rebirth.<sup>33</sup> (If our formation of kamma is arahantship, it is responsible for our not being reborn any longer.) It is explained by The Buddha again and again and again throughout His Teaching: it is the heart, essence, meaning, purpose, goal, and aim of the Dhamma.<sup>34</sup>

For example, The Buddha explains:<sup>35</sup>

**And what, bhikkhus, are the differences in kamma (*kammānaṃ vemattatā*)?**

- There is, bhikkhus, kamma experienced in hell (*kammaṃ niraya-vedanīyaṃ*),
- there is kamma experienced in the animal womb (*kammaṃ tiracchāna-yoni-vedanīyaṃ*),
- there is kamma experienced in the ghost realm (*kammaṃ petti-visaya-vedanīyaṃ*),
- there is kamma experienced in the human world (*kammaṃ manussa-loka-vedanīyaṃ*),
- there is kamma experienced in the deva world (*kammaṃ deva-loka-vedanīyaṃ*).

And The Buddha explains the three times in which kamma may ripen:<sup>36</sup>

**And what, bhikkhus, is the result of kamma (*kammānaṃ vipāko*)?**

**Threefold, bhikkhus, is the result of kamma, I declare:**

\* BIRTH (11) + AGEING&DEATH (12) (conventional teaching (*voḥāra-desanā*)). CONSCIOUSNESS (3) + MIND-MATTER (4) + SIX BASES (5) + CONTACT (6) + SENSATION (7) (ultimate teaching (*param-attha-desanā*)).

<sup>33</sup> Please see also The Buddha’s explanation of the conditions for coming-into-existence in superior, middle and inferior realms, above, p.48, and footnote 37, p.49.

<sup>34</sup> Please see, for example, The Buddha’s detailed explanation given below, Appendix III, ‘Formation and Rebirth’, p.115.

<sup>35</sup> A.VI.II.vi.9 ‘*Nibbedhika-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Penetrating Sutta’)

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.* (The Buddha’s explanation of this <with the similes of kamma as the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture> is quoted footnote 37, p.49.)

- [1] **A present thing [in this life]** (*diṭṭhe-va dhamme*),  
 [2] **or upon rebirth [in the next life]** (*upapajje vā*),  
 [3] **or upon a subsequent occasion [in a life subsequent to that]** (*apare vā pariyāye*).

For example, explaining the formation of good kamma, The Buddha explains the results apparent in this life (*san-diṭṭhiko*), and in future lives:<sup>37</sup>

**The doer of good delights here; he delights hereafter: he delights in both worlds.**

**The thought: 'Good have I done' delights him. And he delights even more when gone to realms of bliss.**

This is one of the things all Buddhists (young and old) understand, at least in principle. We may say it is kindergarten Dhamma. There are even non-Buddhists who understand it, such as the Hindus, and even Christians and Muslims who understand that bodily conduct such as to give food, drink, clothes and medicine, and mental conduct such as bearing wrongs with patience and forgiveness are conditions for rebirth in heaven.<sup>38</sup> Without a such elementary understanding of dependent origination, no Buddhist would bother to observe the precepts or give *dāna*: in fact, someone without a such elementary understanding of dependent origination can hardly be called a Buddhist, for it amounts to wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*).<sup>39</sup> That is why we discussed kamma as the condition for rebirth, in connection with the benefits of giving.<sup>40</sup> We discussed also The Buddha's explanation of kamma, where He also speaks of the ten types of pure or impure conduct performed through the three doors.<sup>41</sup>

The Buddha's explanation of kamma was:<sup>42</sup>

**Volition, bhikkhus, is kamma I declare** (*cetanāhaṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi*).

**With volition does one act by body, speech, and mind.**

Volition (*cetanā*) is mind (*nāma*).<sup>43</sup> It is the act or faculty of willing, of propelling into action. No volition, no kamma. The Buddha explains that if we have performed kamma based on Right View (*Sammā-Diṭṭhi*), we will be reborn in a happy

<sup>37</sup> Dh.p.i.18 'Yamaka Vagga' ('Pairs Chapter')

<sup>38</sup> Some Christians follow the advice given by Christ in the Bible: faith and practice (works). In some Christian traditions, this practice is explained as: 'THE SEVEN WORKS OF CORPORAL MERCY to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, to cloSāmaññanaked, visit prisoners, visit the sick, harbour strangers, bury the dead. THE SEVEN WORKS OF SPIRITUAL MERCY to convert sinners, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, console the afflicted, bear wrongs patiently, forgive injuries, pray for the living and the dead.' (CTCD)

<sup>39</sup> The Buddha explains: 'And what, bhikkhus, is wrong view? "There is nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. No fruit or result of good and bad actions. No this world, no other world. No mother, no father. No beings who are born spontaneously. No good and virtuous ascetics and Brahmins in the world who have realized for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world".' (e.g. M.III.ii.7 'Mahā-Cattārīsaka-Suttaṃ' ('Great Forty Sutta'))

<sup>40</sup> The author delivered four talks on aspects of *dāna* (giving), which have been published as *Modern Dāna*.

<sup>41</sup> Three kinds of bodily formation (+/- killing, stealing, venereal misconduct), four kinds of verbal formation (+/- lies, slander, abuse, prattle), and three kinds of mental formation (+/- covetousness, ill-will, wrong view). (e.g. A.X.V.ii 'Samannāgata Vagga' ('Endowed With Chapter'))

<sup>42</sup> A.VI.vi.9 'Nibbedhika-Suttaṃ' ('Penetrating Sutta')

<sup>43</sup> Please see above 'One Thing after Another', in connection with the discussion on mind-matter (*nāma-rūpa*), p.74.

(harmless) destination, and if we have performed kamma based on wrong view (*micchā-dīṭṭhi*), we will be reborn in an unhappy (harmful destination <sup>44</sup>):<sup>45</sup>

**I understand how beings pass on according to their kamma thus:**

**‘These beings who conducted themselves well in body, speech and mind, who did not revile noble ones, held Right View, and undertook kamma based on Right View, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have been reborn in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.**

**But these beings who conducted themselves badly in body, speech and mind, who reviled noble ones, held wrong view, and undertook kamma based on wrong view, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have been reborn in the realm of ghosts... in the realm of animals... even in hell.’<sup>46</sup>**

Hence, He explains that our present mind-matter is old kamma (*purāṇa-kamma*):<sup>47</sup>

**And what, bhikkhus, is old kamma?**

**The eye is old kamma, to be seen as performed (*abhi-saṅkhatam*), and willed (*abhi-sañ-cetayitam*) and to be experienced (*vedaniyam*).<sup>48</sup>**

**The ear... nose... tongue... body... mind.... This is called old kamma.**

The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are the six bases, mind-matter and consciousness: resultant formations, which is rebirth, Man.<sup>49</sup>

The Buddha explains also that one may perform the mental formation (*citta saṅkhāram*)<sup>50</sup> of a wish for a particular rebirth: He calls it rebirth through formation (*saṅkhār-upapatti*).<sup>51</sup> And He explains that insofar as the right conditions are there (insofar as one has performed the necessary other formations), the formation of such a wish may come true:

**Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu possesses faith, virtue, learning, generosity and wisdom.**

(These qualities are all a noble disciple’s treasures (*dhana*).)<sup>52</sup>

Then The Buddha gives examples of such a bhikkhu’s formation of a wish:

**He thinks: ‘Oh, that ... after death I might appear in the company of well-to-do noblemen! [...well-to-do Brahmins ...householders ...deva-beings]**

**He fixes his mind on the thought (*cittam dahati*), determines the thought (*taṃ cittam adhiṭṭhāti*), devel-**

<sup>44</sup> For the five destinations, please see The Buddha’s explanation above, p.44, and for the relationship between kamma and then the coming-into-existence of consciousness at one of those destinations, please see The Buddha’s explanation above, p.48.

<sup>45</sup> M.III.iii.10 ‘*Deva-Dūta-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Divine Messengers Sutta’)

<sup>46</sup> For this relationship between conduct and future rebirth, please see also above explanations of sensual-, fine-material-, and immaterial coming-into-existence, p.47ff.

<sup>47</sup> S.IV.I.III.v.1 ‘*Kamma-Suttaṃ*’

<sup>48</sup> WILLED: the verb form (past participle serving as adjective) of VOLITION (*cetanā*); could also be the straight adjective form VOLITIVE.

<sup>49</sup> This The Buddha also calls ‘the burden’: please see His explanation above, p.36.

<sup>50</sup> Further to footnote 24, above p.95: here, The Buddha refers to mental formation of kamma by *CITTA-saṅkhāram*. Please see also below, footnote 65, p.103.

<sup>51</sup> M.III.ii.10 ‘*Saṅkhār-Upapatti-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Formation-Rebirth Sutta’) The commentary explains that rebirth is rebirth of only formations, not of a being or person (please see The Buddha’s explanation of Man, above, p.91), and that the formation of the five aggregates (of a human or higher being) is owing to meritorious formation of kamma (*puññābhi-saṅkhāra*) (Please see the above quoted explanation from the ‘Formation Sutta’). And the commentary explains that these *saṅkhārā* (formations) are *patthanā* (aspirations).

<sup>52</sup> NOBLE DISCIPLE’S TREASURES: please see above footnote 10, p.92.

ops the thought (*taṃ cittam bhāveti*).

These formations (*saṅkhārā*) and this abiding of his, thus developed and cultivated, lead to his rebirth there. This, bhikkhus, is the path, the way that leads to rebirth there.

And if one develops the jhānas, one may form the wish to be reborn in the respective Brahmā realm or higher realm.<sup>53</sup> (The formation of such wishes we all know: we discussed it in connection with *dāna*.<sup>54</sup>)

But does The Buddha say we should form wishes for happy rebirths? No. He says we should form the wish for the end of rebirth altogether, for the attainment of Nibbāna. Why? Because as The Buddha explained to the Venerable Ānanda:<sup>55</sup>

I have said: 'Birth is the condition for ageing&death', and this is the way it should be understood.

If, Ānanda, there were no birth at all, anywhere, of anyone or anything: of devas.... of devatas.... of gandhabbas [the name of a kind of deva].... of yakkhas.... of ghosts.... of human beings.... of four-legged ones....<sup>56</sup> of birds.... of reptiles.... if there were absolutely no birth at all of these beings, then, with the absence of all birth, the cessation of birth, would ageing&death appear? (It would not, Venerable Sir.)

Thus, whatever kamma we perform, there is continued rebirth.<sup>57</sup> And even if we are reborn again and again and again in the best of families, with abundant wealth, and with perfect health and stunning beauty, we cannot avoid ageing&death, we cannot avoid *dukkha*. And no matter how long our life span in the deva- or Brahma-realm is, it too ends with death, and that is *dukkha*. The only way to avoid ageing&death is to stop the formation of kamma.

Clear enough, but why, then, do we go on forming kamma? Why do we go on running about in *samsāra*? Why go on opting for birth, ageing&death? This was the bodhisatta's eleventh question:

'With what is there formation? What is the condition for formation?'

And he realized:

'Ignorance is the condition for formation (*avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā*).

The Buddha explains ignorance:<sup>58</sup>

And what, bhikkhus, is ignorance (*avijjā*)?

[1] Non-knowledge of suffering (*dukkhe aññāṇam*),

[2] Non-knowledge of the origin of suffering (*dukkha samudaye aññāṇam*),

[3] Non-knowledge of the cessation of suffering (*dukkha nirodhe aññāṇam*),

[4] Non-knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of suffering (*dukkha nirodha gāminiyā aññāṇam*).

When The Buddha speaks of ignorance, He is referring to non-knowledge

<sup>53</sup> For rebirth into these realms of existence, please see above analysis, p.47.

<sup>54</sup> The seven kinds of wish, and how they affect the quality of the merit one makes when offering, are discussed A.VII.v.9 'Dāna-Mahā-Pphala-Suttam' ('Giving Great-Fruit Sutta').

<sup>55</sup> D.ii.2 'Mahā-Nidāna-Suttam' ('Great Causation Sutta')

<sup>56</sup> FOUR-LEGGED ONES: the Pali says *catu-ppadā*, which literally means four-legged creatures, in English 'quadrupeds' (Latin *quadri/quadru* = four; *pedis* = foot)

<sup>57</sup> Please see also The Buddha's explanation above, p.48.

<sup>58</sup> S.II.I.i.2 'Vibhaṅga-Suttam' ('Analysis Sutta')



about the Four Noble Truths. The condition for our suffering, our ongoing re-birth, our rushing on and running about in *saṃsāra* is our ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. The Buddha explains:<sup>59</sup>

**It is, bhikkhus, because of not understanding and not penetrating the Four Noble Truths that you and I have for a long time rushed on and run about.**<sup>60</sup>

But when The Buddha explained the Second Noble Truth, He said:<sup>61</sup>

**The origin of suffering, as a Noble Truth, is this: it is the craving (*tanhā*) that produces further coming-into-existence accompanied by enjoyment and lust, and enjoying this and that.**

Why does The Buddha in one place say craving is the origin of suffering, and here say it is ignorance? Because, as we have seen, each of the twelve factors is an origin of suffering: suffering has its origin in birth, in coming-into-existence, in clinging, in craving, in sensation, in contact, in the six bases, in mind-matter, in consciousness, in formation, and the mother of all origins of suffering is ignorance. Thus, whether we say craving or ignorance is the origin for suffering, or say craving and ignorance are the origin for suffering, it comes to the same thing: they are all conditioned things that lead to suffering.<sup>62</sup>

The Buddha explains:<sup>63</sup>

**Those ascetics and Brahmins, bhikkhu,**

[1] **who do not understand as it really is: ‘This is suffering’;**

[2] **who do not understand as it really is: ‘This is the origin of suffering’;**

[3] **who do not understand as it really is: ‘This is the cessation of suffering’;**

[4] **who do not understand as it really is: ‘This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering’,  
[they] delight in formations that lead to birth (*jāti-saṃvatta-nikesu saṅkhāresu abhi-ramanti*).**

**...formations that lead to ageing. ...formations that lead to death. ...formations that lead to sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair.**

Owing to ignorance, there is delight in the thousand ‘beautiful things’ that constitute our life, which is craving, formation of mental kamma.<sup>64</sup>

Then The Buddha explains:

**Delighting in such formations (*saṅkhāresu abhi-ratā*), they perform formations (*saṅkhāresu abhi-saṅkharonti*) that lead to birth, perform formations that lead to death, perform formations that lead to sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.**

Owing to ignorance and craving, bodily-, verbal- and mental formations that lead to birth, death and other suffering are performed: the formation of bodily-, verbal, and mental kamma is performed.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>59</sup> S.V.XII.iii.1 ‘*Paṭhama-Koṭṭigāma-Suttaṃ*’ (‘First Koṭṭigāma Sutta’)

<sup>60</sup> As quoted above (p. 21), this ignorance is also why almost all human beings are reborn in an unhappy destination.

<sup>61</sup> S.V.XII.ii.1 ‘*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta’)

<sup>62</sup> Please see also The Buddha’s explanation above, p.48.

<sup>63</sup> S.V.XII.v.6 ‘*Andhakāra-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Darkness Sutta’)

<sup>64</sup> For an example of such delight, please see above, p.32.

<sup>65</sup> Further to footnote 24 above, p.95, and footnote 50, above p.100.; as mentioned (A.IV.IV.iii.1 ‘*Cetanā-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Volition Sutta’)), The Buddha explains that when one performs bodily- (*kāya-*), verbal- (*vacī-*), or mental formation (that He there designates as *MANO-saṅkhāraṃ*), from which there arise pleasure or pain, ignorance is followed (*avijjā anupatitā*). This is merely another way of say-

And then The Buddha explains:

**Having performed such formations (*saṅkhāresu abhi-saṅkharitvā*), they tumble down into the darkness of birth, tumble down into the darkness of death, tumble down into the darkness of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.**

Owing to ignorance, craving, clinging, coming-into-existence and formations, there is birth, the descent of consciousness, the formation of mind-matter, six bases, contact, and sensation: *saṃsāra* (birth, ageing and death) goes on and on and on.<sup>66</sup>

When then, did we begin this insanity? The Buddha explains when it all began:<sup>67</sup>

**Inconceivable, bhikkhus, is the beginning of this *saṃsāra*.**

**A first point is not known of beings rushing on (*sandhāvataṃ*) and running about (*saṃsarataṃ*), hindered by ignorance, and fettered by craving.**

It never began. When The Buddha explains that ignorance is the mother of all our suffering, He does not mean that ignorance is the first cause: there is no such thing as a first cause. As mentioned in an earlier talk, no thing arises from only one cause, and no thing arises alone: it is always many causes that give rise to many results.<sup>68</sup>

Dependent origination does not explain a series of discrete events arising one after the other, like the discrete frames of a cinema reel: 'First this happened, and then that happened, and then, and then, and then.' Such a view is one-dimensional, and distorts the multi-dimensional complexity of reality.<sup>69</sup> The factors of dependent origination are not discrete events but mutually conditioning and conditioned formations: formations in many way forming formations.<sup>70</sup>

ing that ignorance is the condition for those three kinds of formation. The Buddha then explains that with the cessation of ignorance, those three kinds of formation no longer exist, which means that the pleasure or pain of their result no longer arises = kamma formation is no longer performed = no resultant formation of (future) sensation. This explanation applies for also the three kinds of formation in the 'Analysis Sutta' (p.93), where mental formation is designated *CITTA-saṅkhāra*). All these suttas are describing exactly the same dependently originated processes of formation, although The Buddha does not always use the same terminology: this was not a problem for His immediate audience. In order to avoid imagining that the suttas are incoherent, and in order to avoid possible and serious misrepresentation of the Dhamma, a ~~modern~~ audience will, however, as a matter of course need to exercise caution, and seek the help of a teacher qualified according to the Buddha's criteria, and seek the help of the teachers that are the Pali Commentaries. For the result of misguided and misinformed misrepresentation of The Buddha, please see The Buddha's words above, p.82). Please see also below, 'He Does Not Know the Watering Place', etc., p.107ff.

<sup>66</sup> For the relationship between these five conditions in one life working as five causes for the five effects in the next life, please see The Buddha's explanation of the conditions for coming-into-existence above, p.46, and above, Table 3, p.98.

<sup>67</sup> For example, S.II.IV.i.1 '*Tiṇa-Kaṭṭha-Suttaṃ*' ('Grass and Wood Sutta')

<sup>68</sup> Please see explanation and source references above, p. 65.

<sup>69</sup> This wrong view may also be called the 'historical view'. Please see also above, footnote 58, p.53.

<sup>70</sup> Hence, one reason why dependent origination may be difficult to understand can be the absence of acquaintance with the twenty-four ways in which formations condition one another. They comprise the scheme of composition for the Buddha's extensive (although not exhaustive) teaching of the great *Paṭṭhāna*, the seventh book of the Abhidhamma. The twenty-four conditions

But to analyse the many dimensions of reality, we need do as does The Buddha: we need to discuss the formations one by one.<sup>71</sup>

The idea of a first cause is wrong view. As The Buddha just said, no first point is discerned, which is why dependent origination cannot be compared to a ladder, for a ladder is static, and one may speak of progression from the bottom rung to the top rungs. If we wish to compare dependent origination with anything, we may compare it to a revolving wheel: it is in perpetual motion, and we cannot speak of progression from a first spoke to a last spoke. Indeed, when explaining dependent origination, the Texts do compare it to a wheel: the Wheel of Coming-into-existence (*bhava cakka*).<sup>72</sup>

The Buddha explains how ignorance is not the first cause:<sup>73</sup>

**A first point, bhikkhus, of ignorance is not known [such as]: ‘Before this, ignorance was not, but afterwards it arose.’ And while that is said, bhikkhus, nevertheless this is known: ‘Ignorance has its causal condition.’ Ignorance has its nutriment.**

Here, The Buddha speaks of ignorance’s nutriment (*āhāra*), which is the formation that ignorance feeds on.

- Ignorance feeds, says The Buddha, on formation of the five hindrances (*pañca-nīvaraṇa*):
  - 1) sensual desire (*kāma-cchanda*)
  - 2) ill will (*vyāpāda*)
  - 3) sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*)

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are: 1) cause condition, 2) object condition, 3) predominance condition, 4) proximity condition, 5) contiguity condition, 6) co-nascent condition, 7) mutuality condition, 8) support condition, 9) decisive support condition, 10) pre-nascent condition, 11) post-nascent condition, 12) repetition condition, 13) kamma condition, 14) result condition, 15) nutriment condition, 16) faculty condition, 17) jhāna condition, 18) path condition, 19) association condition, 20) dissociation condition, 21) presence condition, 22) absence condition, 23) disappearance condition, 24) non-disappearance condition. Familiarity with the twenty-four conditions is not easily achieved (neither in theory nor in practice), but once achieved, the complexity of many of The Buddha’s analyses in the suttas becomes clear, including His teachings on dependent origination and cessation. The twenty-four conditions are explained briefly in Vis.xvii ‘*Paññā-Bhūmi-Niddesa*’ (‘Wisdom-Soil Description’) PoP.66ff.

<sup>71</sup> This is explained in a 𑀓𑀔𑀕𑀖𑀗 mode by the Venerable translator of the *Visuddhi-Magga* (*Path of Purification*): ‘The Dependent Origination, or Structure of Conditions, appears as a flexible formula with the intention of describing the ordinary human situation of a man in his world (or indeed any conscious event where ignorance and craving have not entirely ceased). That situation is always complex, since it is implicit that Consciousness with no Object, or Being (*bhava*—becoming, or however rendered [in *Modern Birth, Ageing&Death* rendered *coming-into-existence*]) without Consciousness (of it), is impossible except as an artificial abstraction. The Dependent Origination, being designed to portray the essentials of that situation in the limited dimensions of words, and using only elements recognizable in experience, is not a logical proposition.... Nor is it a temporal cause-and-effect chain: each member has to be examined as to its nature in order to determine what its relations to the others are (e.g. whether successive in time or co-nascent [at the same time], positive or negative, etc., etc). A purely cause-and-effect chain would not represent the pattern of a situation that is always complex, always subjective-objective, static-dynamic, positive-negative, and so on.’ (PoP-p.676)

<sup>72</sup> ‘This is an exposition of the basic state whereby there is bondage for him who grasps it, and liberation for him who lets it go: it is not an exposition of a simple beginning.’ Vis.xvii ‘*Paññā-Bhūmi-Niddesa*’ (‘Wisdom-Soil Description’) PoP.273ff.

<sup>73</sup> A.X.II.ii.1 ‘*Avijjā-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Ignorance Sutta’)

- 4) restlessness and worry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*)  
And the most serious of all,
- 5) doubt (*vici-kicchā*)(which dogs all □□□□□□□□ and ‘progressive’, ‘open-minded’, ‘scientific’ Buddhists, ordained and unordained). It is doubt about The Buddha’s enlightenment, doubt about the Dhamma (as found in the Pali Texts), doubt about the Sangha, doubt about the training (morality, concentration and wisdom), doubt about the past (past lives), doubt about the future (future lives), doubt about the past and future, and doubt about dependent origination, the workings of kamma.<sup>74</sup>
- The five hindrances feed on formation of the three kinds of misconduct (*tīṇi duccharitā*): bodily misconduct (*kāya-duccaritaṃ*), verbal misconduct (*vacī-duccaritaṃ*), and mental misconduct; (*mano-duccaritaṃ*). We just discussed them.
  - Misconduct feeds on formation of non-restraint of the faculties (*indriya a-saṃvaro*): non-restraint of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, which means there is formation of unwholesome mind-states.<sup>75</sup>
  - Non-restraint of the faculties feeds on formation of lack of mindfulness (*a-sati*), and lack of full awareness: (*a-sampajañña*), not being fully aware of one’s bodily-, verbal- and mental formations day and night.<sup>76</sup>
  - Lack of mindfulness and lack of full awareness feed on formation of unwise attention: (*a-yoniso manasikāra*): seeing the impermanent as permanent, seeing suffering as happiness, seeing that which has no self as having self, and seeing the foul as beautiful.<sup>77</sup>
  - Unwise attention feeds on formation of unfaith (*a-ssaddhiya*): formation of faith is one of the seven treasures of the noble disciple.  
Formation of unfaith is to fail to form faith in that The Buddha is:<sup>78</sup>
    - ☉ **Unsurpassable Trainer of men** (*Anuttaro purisa-damma Sārathi*)
    - ☉ Teacher of devas and human beings (*Satthā deva-manussānaṃ*)
    - ☉ **Enlightened** (*Buddho*)
  - Lack of faith feeds on formation of not listening to True Dhamma (*a-sa-ddhamma-ssavana*): formation of studying the teachings of a teacher other than

<sup>74</sup> DOUBT ABOUT THE BUDDHA, ETC.: see quotation p.319. DOUBT ABOUT THE PAST, ETC.: see, for example, M.I.i.2 ‘*Sabb-Āsava Sutta*’ (‘All the Taints Sutta’).

<sup>75</sup> Restraint of the faculties is explained as a preliminary element of the bhikkhu’s training in, for example, M.I.iv.8 ‘*Mahā-Taṅhā-Saṅkhaya-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Great Craving-Destruction Sutta’), and D.i.2 ‘*Sāmañña-Phala-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Fruits of Asceticism’).

<sup>76</sup> The sutta that is here referred to says *a-satā-sampajañña*, which is a compound of *a-sati* (non-mindfulness), and *a-sampajañña* (non-full-awareness). Mindfulness and full awareness are explained as another preliminary element of the bhikkhu’s training in, again, for example M.I.iv.8 ‘*Mahā-Taṅhā-Saṅkhaya-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Great Craving-Destruction Sutta’), and D.i.2 ‘*Sāmañña-Phala-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Fruits of Asceticism’).

<sup>77</sup> For details, please see, for example, M.I.i.2 ‘*Sabb-Āsava-Suttaṃ*’ (‘All the Taints Sutta’), and its commentary.

<sup>78</sup> A.VII.i.6 ‘*Vitthata-Dhana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Detailed Treasure Sutta’). For all seven treasures, please see above footnote 10, p.92. The treasure of faith includes faith in the nine qualities that The Buddha explains are possessed by a Fully Enlightened Buddha: ‘Thus is The Exalted One: (*Iti’pi so, Bhagavā*); Worthy (*Arahaṃ*); Perfectly Enlightened (*Sammā-sambuddho*); Possessed of Knowledge and Conduct (*Vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno*); Accomplished (*Sugato*); Knower of worlds (*Lokavidū*); Unsurpassable Trainer of men (*Anuttaro purisa-damma Sārathi*); Teacher of devas and human beings (*Satthā deva-manussānaṃ*); Enlightened (*Buddho*); Blessed (*Bhagavā’ti*).’

The Buddha, which includes formation of home-made Dhamma that is irreconcilable with The Buddha's Word.<sup>79</sup>

- And finally, not listening to True Dhamma feeds on formation of not associating with the True Man (*a-sappurisa samsevo*): failing to form association with people whose formations are:
  - ✓ to listen to True Dhamma
  - ✓ to speak True Dhamma
  - ✓ to have faith
  - ✓ to form wise attention
  - ✓ to form mindfulness
  - ✓ to form full awareness
  - ✓ to form restraint of the faculties
  - ✓ to form observance of the five precepts  
(on Uposathas the eight precepts; if they are bhikkhus, their formation is observance of the Vinaya)
  - ✓ whose mental formation is wisdom rather than ignorance.

Not associating with the True Man would in the modern day include not associating with learned, qualified (by Sutta and Vinaya standards), conscientious, upright elder bhikkhus who teach and practise the threefold higher training of bhikkhus, laid down by the Perfectly Enlightened Buddha. Not associating with the True Man would in the modern day include associating with, consulting, and taking refuge in academics, theorists, and other masters of alien (unenlightening) disciplines: the nebulous, idle conjecture that is linguistics in all its forms, as well as, for example, psychology, psychoanalysis, biology, zoology, physics, archaeology, history, and Buddhology (yes, it does exist). Mastery in such disciplines does not and cannot include any whatsoever practical experience or understanding of the Dhamma-Vinaya. An academic and scientist depends for his livelihood not on faith in (and therefore deference towards) The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, nor on morality, concentration and wisdom: he does not depend for his livelihood on a single one of the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment.<sup>80</sup> The academic's view of the Dhamma is that it is merely a literature, on a par with any other 'religious' text, and he treats it as merely such. Furthermore, the chief requisite of the modern scientist and intellectual, ladies and gentlemen, is by necessity wrong view (*micchā-ditṭhi*): denying the workings of kamma, denying rebirth, denying the existence of other realms of existence, denying that there are such people as Buddhas, arahants and other bhikkhus who know and see these things, and teach them:<sup>81</sup> this wrong view is the foundation of modern orthodoxy.

An academic depends for his livelihood on originality of thought (impudence and conceit), 'ground-breaking' theses, and 'innovative' theories: unless they

<sup>79</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of how to decide when Dhamma is home-made and when it is reconcilable with the Exalted One's Word (*Bhagavato Vacanam*), please see below, Appendix IV 'It this the Dhamma-Vinaya?', p.281ff.

<sup>80</sup> For the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment, please see The Buddha's explanation below, p.112.

<sup>81</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of wrong view, please see footnote 39, p. 99.

are forthcoming on a regular basis, he does not receive his paycheck, or does not get his contract renewed. Hence, if we are desirous of liberation from suffering, our taking refuge in academics is the partially blind asking for directions from the completely blind: out of the frying pan into the fire.<sup>82</sup>

Now, The Buddha passed away about two thousand six hundred years ago, so we cannot get the Dhamma directly from His mouth. But those bhikkhus who did get it directly from His mouth were good enough to memorize and recite what they had heard from Him and other wise bhikkhus, and to organize it, and even explain it. That is what we now call the Pali Texts. The Pali Texts are the only place where we may find the True Dhamma: whether we like it or not, the Exalted One's Word (*Bhagavato Vacanam*) can nowhere else be found.

And when, owing to our natural benightedness, we are unable to understand the Exalted One's Word, and are in danger of going horribly wrong, the Pali Texts include extensive and learned commentaries to keep us on the right track. That way, and that way only, are we able to follow The Buddha's advice of going to wise bhikkhus for help, when there is Dhamma we do not understand.<sup>83</sup>

**...when you do not understand the meaning of My statements, then ask either Me about it, or those bhikkhus who are wise.**

The Buddha describes the bhikkhu who neglects to do this:<sup>84</sup>

**He does not know the watering place** (*na tittham jānāti*).

**He does not know what it is to have drunk** (*na pītam jānāti*).

The Buddha explains that possessed of these two qualities:

**a bhikkhu is incapable** (*bhikkhu abhabbo*) **of growth, increase and fulfilment** (*vuddhim, virūḥim, vepullam*) **in this Dhamma-Vinaya....** (*imasmiṃ Dhamma-Vinaye*)

And The Buddha explains further:

**And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu not know the watering place?**

**Here, a bhikkhu does not go from time to time to those bhikkhus of great learning** (*bahu-ssutā*), **versed in the doctrine** (*āgat-āgamā*), **masters of the Dhamma** (*Dhamma-dharā*), **masters of the Vinaya** (*Vinaya-dharā*), **masters of the Matrices** (*Mātikā-dharā*).<sup>85</sup>

**And he does not enquire and ask questions of them thus: 'How is this, Venerable Sir? What is the meaning of this?'**

**Those venerable ones the unrevealed [they] do not reveal** (*a-viva-ṭaṅgeva na vivaranti*), **the unclear [they] do not make clear** (*a-nuttānī-kataṅga na uttānī karonti*), **the many doubt-based things** (*anekavhitesu ca karikhā-thānīyesu dhammesu*) **the doubt [they] do not dispel** (*kaikham na paṭivinodenti*).

**That is how a bhikkhu does not know the watering place.**

This is the result of neglecting to follow The Buddha's advice: our doubts are

<sup>82</sup> OUT OF THE FRYING PAN INTO THE FIRE: out of one evil into a greater (CTCD)

<sup>83</sup> M.I.iii.2 'Alagadd-Ūpama-Suttaṃ' ('Snake Simile Sutta')

<sup>84</sup> These are two qualities out of eleven. For all eleven, please see footnote 29, p.28.

<sup>85</sup> OF GREAT LEARNING: learned in the suttas, stanzas, etc. VERSED IN THE DOCTRINE: scholarly Dhamma (*pariyatti-Dhamma*). MASTERS OF THE DHAMMA: Dhamma of sutta and Abhidhamma (*Suttā-Ābhidhamma*). MASTERS OF THE VINAYA: [self-explanatory]. MASTERS OF THE MATRICES: the matrices of the [just mentioned] Dhamma-Vinaya (*Dhamma-Vinayānaṃ mātikāya*). (Subcommentary to A.X.I.ii.1 'Senāsana-Suttaṃ' ('Dwelling Sutta'), where The Buddha gives this as one of five factors for a suitable dwelling.)

not dispelled, rather, they are augmented: our ignorance becomes every day darker, more solid and impenetrable, the mind unwieldy and stubborn. This being the case, the Dhamma that appears unclear (about which we are puzzled) we may blunderingly dismiss as ‘contrived’, as non-Dhamma (*a-Dhamma*), as a ‘corrupt’ interpolation by what we must then see as the ‘contriving/corrupt Sangha of the past Councils: we may do worse, which is to teach others to commit the same blunder. This amounts to nothing less than cultivation of blind unfaith in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. The Buddha explains the results:<sup>86</sup>

**Those bhikkhus, bhikkhus, who pronounce Dhamma as non-Dhamma** (*dhammaṃ a-dhammoti dīpentī*), **those bhikkhus, bhikkhus, practise** (*paṭipannā*) **for the many’s harm** (*bahu-jana-a-hitāya*), **for the many’s unhappiness** (*bahu-jana a-sukkhāya*), **for the many’s ill** (*bahuno janassa anattāya*), **for the harm, and suffering of devas and men** (*a-hitāya dukkhāya deva-manussānaṃ*).

**And much** (*bahuñ-ca*) **do those bhikkhus, bhikkhus, demerit generate** (*a-puññaṃ pasavanti*), **and bring about the disappearance of this True Dhamma** (*Sa-Ddhamma*).

Thus dangerous is it to study the profound Dhamma without proper guidance,<sup>87</sup> with only our own conceit as master.<sup>88</sup> The Buddha explains further:<sup>89</sup>

**Here, bhikkhus, some foolish men** (*mogha-purisā*) **master the Dhamma** (*suttas, stanzas, expositions, verses, utterances, sayings, birth stories, wonders, and answers to questions*), **but having mastered the Dhamma, they do not investigate the meaning of those teachings with wisdom. Not having investigated the meaning of those teachings with wisdom they do not find delight** [*in the teachings*] (*na nijjhānaṃ khamanti*).

**Instead, they learn the Dhamma only for the sake of criticizing others, and for the sake of winning in debates, and they do not experience the good for which they learned the Dhamma. What is the cause?**

**Wrongly grasped, bhikkhus, are the teachings** (*du-ggahitattā, bhikkhave, dhammānaṃ*).

With such an impure motive for studying the Dhamma, we shall impossibly attain the good of any kind of enlightenment.<sup>90</sup> Instead:

**Those teachings, being wrongly grasped by them, conduce to their harm and suffering for a long time.**<sup>91</sup>

To study the profound Pali Texts without care, deference and respect, or indeed, to do so with bluster<sup>92</sup> in mind, is to study the Dhamma with an impure,

<sup>86</sup> A.I.x ‘*Dutiya-Pamād-Ādi Vaggo*’ (‘Second Negligence Etc. Chapter’)

<sup>87</sup> The Buddha explains this as arising also when bhikkhus confuse letter and meaning. (Please see quotation below, p.295). It is also one of what The Buddha calls the future dangers: uninstructed/ill-instructed bhikkhus, who for that reason are unable to understand the Abhidhamma, teach the Abhidhamma finding fault with the Abhidhamma, and disparaging the Abhidhamma. (A.V.II.iii.9 ‘*Tatiya Anāgata Bhaya-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Third Future Danger Sutta’))

<sup>88</sup> One may then also pronounce non-Dhamma as Dhamma, in which case the consequences are the same (ibid.). Please see also above, The Buddha’s words to the bhikkhu Sāti, son of a fisherman, regarding misrepresentation of The Buddha p.82.

<sup>89</sup> M.I.iii.2 ‘*Alagadd-Ūpama-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Snake Simile Sutta’)

<sup>90</sup> The Commentary explains that the good is the paths and fruitions.

<sup>91</sup> The Buddha explains further: ‘To his own ruin the fool gains knowledge, for it cleaves his head and destroys his innate goodness.’ (Dhp.v.13 ‘*Bāla Vagga*’ (‘Fool Chapter’))

<sup>92</sup> BLUSTER: ‘self-assertive talk [POD]’ ‘If you say that someone is blustering, you mean that they are speaking aggressively but without authority, often because they are angry or offended. □  
‘*That’s lunacy, he blustered... He was still blustering, but there was panic in his eyes... also a*

darkened mind, in which case we feed our doubt to satiety, till there is firm and fixed blind unfaith in The Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. That being so, we shall have made it impossible for ourselves ever to develop sufficient confidence to progress in the Dhamma: be we a bhikkhu or non-bhikkhu. This is namely what The Buddha refers to as not to know what it is to have drunk:

**And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu not know what it is to have drunk?**

**Here, when the Dhamma-Vinaya proclaimed by the Tathāgata is being taught, a bhikkhu does not gain enthusiasm for the meaning (*na labhati attha-vedam*), does not gain enthusiasm for the Dhamma (*na labhati dhamma-vedam*), does not gain Dhamma-related joy (*na labhati dhamm-ūpasamhitam pāmojjam*).**

Does it require a Perfectly Enlightened Buddha to explain that we can progress nowhere in the Dhamma without delight, enthusiasm and joy? Of course not. If we read the profound Dhamma with the furrowed brow on the swelled head<sup>93</sup> of the sceptic, how could the Dhamma ever help us? Then are we like one of the first people who met the Fully Enlightened Buddha: the naked ascetic Upaka. When the Buddha told him He was Buddha, He wagged his head, said: ‘That may be so,’ and walked on: walked on to continued rebirth, ageing and death.<sup>94</sup>

The Dhamma is the only raft that exists which can carry us out of continued rebirth, ageing and death, to the yonder shore. And as things are, we can find the Dhamma only in the Pali Texts: the requisites of the raft are found nowhere else. With blind unfaith in that the raft can carry us out, we cannot cross the waters of *samsāra*. And if we furthermore bit by bit remove parts of the raft, it will eventually fall to pieces, and we shall have nothing to stop us from drowning in the waters of *samsāra*, again and again and again.

Until complete enlightenment is achieved, the raft must be clung to (even be it with blind faith), and so long as we need to cling to the raft, of course, we need to look after the raft, and familiarize ourselves with how to make best and safest use of it.<sup>95</sup> That is the only way to put an end to the dependently originated formation of ignorance.<sup>96</sup>

Let us then summarize the dependent origination of ignorance:

- 1) not associating with the True Man nourishes not listening to the True Dhamma;<sup>97</sup>
- 2) not listening to the True Dhamma nourishes unfaith;
- 3) unfaith nourishes unwise attention;

noun [CCED]’

<sup>93</sup> SWELLED HEAD: conceit (POD)

<sup>94</sup> M.I.iii.6 ‘*Ariya-Pariyesanā-Suttam*’ (‘Noble Search Sutta’) (This sutta is also called ‘*Pāsa-Rāsi-Suttam*’ (‘Mass of Snares Sutta’)) This man was more fortunate than most, however, for the Commentary explains that he later became a bhikkhu, and attained the state of non-return.

<sup>95</sup> The author is here alluding to The Buddha’s often quoted simile of the Dhamma as a raft upon which one crosses the waters of *samsāra*. (M.I.iii.2 ‘*Alagadd-Ūpama-Suttam*’ (‘Snake Simile Sutta’))

<sup>96</sup> Doubt about the Texts is discussed further below, Appendix IV, ‘Is This the Dhamma-Vinaya?’, p.281.

<sup>97</sup> The Buddha explains that not to associate with the foolish is the first blessing supreme, and to associate with the wise is the second of blessing supreme, of the thirty-eight blessings supreme available to Man. Please see quotation below, p.305.



- 4) unwise attention nourishes lack of mindfulness and full awareness;
- 5) lack of mindfulness and full awareness nourish non-restraint of the faculties;
- 6) non-restraint of the faculties nourishes misconduct;
- 7) misconduct nourishes the five hindrances;
- 8) the five hindrances (one of which is doubt) nourish ignorance.

The formations of these eight nutriments of ignorance are, of course, in themselves formations of ignorance: ignorance of the Four Noble Truths, also called delusion (*moha*). Ignorance is the mother of suffering, and the grandmother, great-grandmother, etc.: the mother of the mothers of suffering. The Buddha explains:<sup>98</sup>

**Not, bhikkhus, from delusion does non-delusion arise: it is, bhikkhus, delusion that arises from delusion.**

The bodhisatta started out by asking what the condition was for ageing & death, and he arrived at ignorance. Then, says The Buddha, the bodhisatta summarized what he had discovered. Let us do the same:<sup>99</sup>

**In this way,**

- **Ignorance is the condition for formation** (*avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā*);
- **formation is the condition for consciousness** (*saṅkhāra-paccayā viññāṇaṃ*);
- **consciousness is the condition for mind-matter** (*viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṃ*);
- **mind-matter is the condition for the six bases** (*nāma-rūpa-paccayā saḷāyatanaṃ*);
- **the six bases are the condition for contact** (*saḷāyatana-paccayā phassa*);
- **contact is the condition for sensation** (*phassa-paccayā vedanā*);
- **sensation is the condition for craving** (*vedanā-paccayā taṇhā*);
- **craving is the condition for clinging** (*taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṃ*);
- **clinging is the condition for coming-into-existence** (*upādāna-paccayā bhava*);
- **coming-into-existence is the condition for birth** (*bhava-paccayā jāti*);
- **birth is the condition for ageing & death** (*jāti-paccayā jarā-maraṇaṃ*), **sorrow, lamentation, pain** (*soka, parideva, dukkha*), **grief and despair's arising** (*domanassa-upāyāsā sambhavanti*).

**Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering** (*evam-etassa kevalassa dukkha-kkhandhassa samudayo hoti*).

A briefer summary of everything we have discussed is, of course:<sup>100</sup>

***Imasmim sati, idaṃ hoti; imassuppāda, idaṃ uppajjati.***

**With that, this is; that arises, with the arising of this.**

Where is the end of all this? Nibbāna: the Third Noble Truth: the cessation of this whole mass of suffering. The Buddha explains how He as the bodhisatta realized the factors of dependent cessation:<sup>101</sup>

**Then, bhikkhus, there was wise attention** (*yoniso manasikāra*), **and by wisdom the realization** (*paññāya abhi-samayo*);

<sup>98</sup> A.VI.I.iv.9 'Nidāna-Suttaṃ' ('Origins Sutta')

<sup>99</sup> Here, the author told his audience that to repeat this series of truths every day was a very meritorious thing to do, and he suggested they begin that very day.

<sup>100</sup> e.g. M.I.iv.8 'Mahā-Taṇhā-Saṅkhaya-Suttaṃ' ('Great Craving-destruction Sutta')

<sup>101</sup> S.II.I.10 'Gotama-Suttaṃ' ('Gotama Sutta')

- **‘Without birth, there is no ageing&death; with birth’s cessation ageing&death ceases** (*jāti-nirodhā jarā-marāṇa-nirodho*).’ ...
- **‘With no coming-into-existence, there is no birth; with the cessation of coming-into-existence, birth ceases** (*bhava-nirodhā jāti-nirodho*).’ ...
- **‘Without clinging, there is no coming-into-existence; with clinging’s cessation, coming-into-existence ceases** (*upādāna-nirodhā bhava-nirodho*).’ ...
- **‘Without craving, there is no clinging; with craving’s cessation, clinging ceases** (*taṇhā-nirodhā upādāna-nirodho*).’ ...
- **‘Without sensation, there is no craving; with sensation’s cessation, craving ceases** (*vedanā-nirodhā taṇhā-nirodho*).’ ...
- **‘Without contact, there is no sensation; with contact’s cessation, sensation ceases** (*phassa-nirodhā vedanā-nirodho*).’ ...
- **‘Without the six bases, there is no contact; with the six bases’ cessation, contact ceases** (*saḷāyatana-nirodhā phassa-nirodho*).’ ...
- **‘Without mind-matter, there are no six bases; with mind-matter’s cessation, the six bases cease** (*nāma-rūpa-nirodhā saḷāyatana-nirodho*).’ ...
- **‘Without consciousness, there is no mind-matter; with consciousness’s cessation, mind-matter ceases** (*viññāṇa-nirodhā nāma-rūpa-nirodho*).’ ...
- **‘Without formation, there is no consciousness; with formation’s cessation, consciousness ceases** (*saṅkhāra-nirodhā viññāṇa-nirodho*).’ ...
- **‘Without ignorance, there is no formation; with ignorance’s cessation, formation ceases** (*avijjā-nirodhā saṅkhāra-nirodho*).’ ...

Thus, with ignorance’s remainderless fading away and cessation (*avijjāya tveva asesavirāga nirodhā*) formation ceases... consciousness ceases... mind-matter ceases... the six bases cease ... contact ceases... sensation ceases... craving ceases... clinging ceases... coming-into-existence ceases... birth ceases... with birth’s cessation, ageing&death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair cease.

Thus is this is the cessation of the whole mass of suffering (*evametassa kevalassa dukkhak-khandhassa nirodho hoti*).

Or, in brief:

*Imasmim asati, idaṃ na hoti; imassa nirodhā, idaṃ nirujjati.*

(Without that, this is not; that ceases, with the cessation of this.)

At the end of forty-five years of teaching the True Dhamma, three months before His final passing-away, the Perfectly Enlightened Buddha explained the conditions for the cessation of suffering in terms of practice.

Let us bow our heads, and listen with deference:<sup>102</sup>

For this reason, bhikkhus, these things of which I have direct knowledge [and] have taught, these you should learn well (*sādhukaṃ uggahetvā*), cultivate (*āsevitabbā*), develop (*bhāvetabbā*), practise much (*bahulī-kātabbā*): so that this holy life is established [and] long endures (*assa ciraṭṭhitaṃ*): for the many’s welfare (*bahujana hitāya*), for the many’s happiness (*bahujana sukhāya*), out of compassion for the world (*lok-ānukampāya*), for the benefit (*atthāya*), well being (*hitāya*), [and] happiness (*sukhāya*) of devas and men.

And what, bhikkhus, are these things of which I have direct knowledge and have taught, which you should learn well, cultivate, develop, practise much, so that this holy life is established, and long endures, for the many’s welfare, for the many’s happiness, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of devas and men?

They are:

<sup>102</sup> D.ii.3 ‘*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttam*’ (‘Great Parinibbāna Sutta’)

- ☉ the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Cattāro Sati-Paṭṭhānā*),
- ☉ the Four Right Efforts (*Cattāro Samma-Ppadhānā*),
- ☉ the Four Bases of Success (*Cattāro Iddhi-Pādā*),
- ☉ the Five Faculties (*Pañc-Indriyāni*),
- ☉ the Five Powers (*Pañca Balāni*),
- ☉ the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*Satta Bojjh-Aṅgā*),
- ☉ the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariyo Aṭṭh-Aṅgiko Maggo*).

These, bhikkhus, are the things of which I have direct knowledge and have taught, which you should learn well, cultivate, develop, practise much, so that this holy life is established, and long endures, for the many's welfare, for the many's happiness, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of devas and men.

These are what is called the Thirty-Seven Requisites of Enlightenment (*Satta-Tiṃsa-Bodhi-Pakkhiya-Dhammā*): the thirty-seven conditions for enlightenment. Do you know what they mean?<sup>103</sup>

If you want to cultivate birth, ageing and death, to develop more birth, ageing and death, want to practise birth, ageing and death much, so that your continued life in *samsāra* is established, and long endures, for your and everyone else's harm, for your and everyone else's unhappiness, out of selfish disregard for the world, for the detriment, ill-being and unhappiness of devas and men, you do not need to know what the thirty-seven conditions for enlightenment are, for then are you no true Buddhist.

But if you want to abandon birth, ageing and death, to prevent birth, ageing and death from taking place, to neglect birth, ageing and death much, so that your continued life in *samsāra* is disestablished, and endures for only a short time, for your and everyone else's welfare, for your and everyone else's happiness, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of devas and men, you should:

- ☉ associate with the True Man;
- ☉ listen to the True Dhamma;
- ☉ have faith in The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha;
- ☉ attend wisely to things;
- ☉ be mindful and fully aware;
- ☉ restrain your faculties;
- ☉ conduct yourself well;
- ☉ and develop the five faculties (*pañc-indriyāni*):<sup>104</sup>

<sup>103</sup> THIRTY-SEVEN REQUISITES OF ENLIGHTENMENT: although not called such, they are all explained in, for example, M.II.iii.7 '*Mahā-Sakuludāyī-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Sakuludāyīn Sutta' Sakuludāyīn is the wanderer who is The Buddha's interlocutor.)

<sup>104</sup> As mentioned above, the five hindrances are the condition for ignorance: they hinder progress towards Nibbāna. The five faculties, however, hinder the five hindrances, and lead necessarily to Nibbāna. The Buddha once asked the Venerable Sāriputta: 'Sāriputta, do you have faith that the faculty of faith [-energy, -mindfulness, -concentration, and -wisdom], when developed and cultivated, has the Deathless as its ground, the Deathless as its destination and the Deathless as its goal?' The Venerable Sāriputta answered: 'Venerable Sir, I do not go by faith in the Exalted One about this... Those by whom this has not been known, seen, understood, realized and touched by wisdom: they would have to go by faith in others about this... But those by whom this has been known, seen, understood, realized and touched by wisdom: they would be without perplexity or doubt about this...' And he explains that he is one of the latter. (S.V.IV.v.4 '*Pubba Koṭṭhaka-Sutta*'

- 1) faith (*saddhā*),
- 2) energy (*virīya*),
- 3) mindfulness (*sati*),
- 4) concentration (*samādhi*),
- 5) wisdom (*paññā*).

Then will you as a matter of course learn in theory, and begin to learn in practice, what the thirty-seven Requisites of Enlightenment are: then may you perhaps begin to think to consider the possibility of calling yourself a true Buddhist.

When you have learned the thirty-seven Requisites of Enlightenment so well that they have been learned to the full, then will you have shut the door in the face of continued birth, ageing and death.<sup>105</sup>

Thank you.

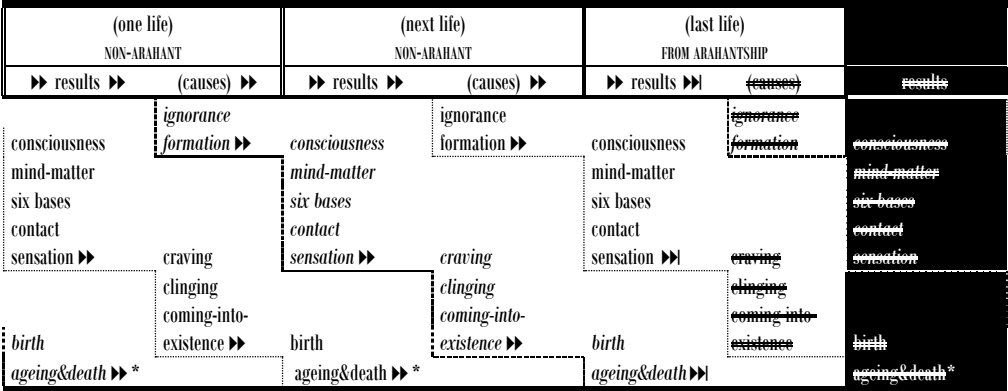
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*taṃ* ' (‘Eastern Gatehouse Sutta’)

<sup>105</sup> Please see below, Appendix II ‘Knocking at the Right Door’, p.247ff.

BIRTH, AGEING AND DEATH FROM LIFE TO LIFE  
TILL THE END OF BIRTH, AGEING AND DEATH

- 1 ...thus far the round [of rebirth] goes as much as can be discerned in this life, namely to mind-matter together with consciousness.
- 2 ...a being's rebirth is owing to a being: one is reborn according to what one has done.
- 3 In this way, Ānanda, kamma is the field, consciousness is the seed, craving the moisture... For beings (hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving)... consciousness is founded... Thus in the future, there is further coming-into-existence of rebirth.
- 4 Because the fool has not lived the holy life for the complete destruction of suffering.... with the breakup of the body, the fool fares on to [another] body. Faring on to [another] body, he is not freed from birth, ageing and death....  
Because the wise man has lived the holy life for the complete destruction of suffering.... with the breakup of the body, the wise man does not fare on to [another] body. Not faring on to [another] body, he is freed from birth, ageing and death.



\*BIRTH + AGEING&DEATH (conventional teaching (*voḥāra-desanā*))= CONSCIOUSNESS + MIND-MATTER + SIX BASES + CONTACT + SENSATION (ultimate teaching (*param-atha-desanā*)).

Results in the life of both a non-arahant and arahant : Kamma formation in a past life results in: the arising of a rebirth consciousness, and subsequent consciousnesses in that life, and the simultaneous arising of mind-matter, the six sense bases, contact, and sensation.

Causes in non-arahant's life : The non-arahant is possessed of ignorance. Hence, when there is sensation, there is craving, and clinging, owing to which there is coming-into-existence of kamma, the formation of kamma. So there is at death the formation of a rebirth consciousness.

Causes in arahant's life : The arahant was in the past possessed of ignorance. Hence, there is still sensation, but because there is now no ignorance, there is no craving, and no clinging, which means there is no further coming-into-existence of kamma, no formation of kamma. So there is at death no formation of a rebirth consciousness.

1 The Buddha explains that in analysing the elements of one life according to dependent origination, one can go only as far as the arising of mind-matter and consciousness at rebirth. (D.ii.2 'Mahā Nidāna-Suttaṃ' ('Great Causation Sutta')) Please see above, p.82.

2 The Buddha explains that the kamma one has as a certain being performed in one life determines one's rebirth as another being in a future life. (M.II.i.7 'Kukkuravatika-Suttaṃ' ('Dog-Duty Ascetic Sutta')) Please see above, p.94.

3 The Buddha explains that with kamma-result, and kamma (performed owing to ignorance and craving, there is the coming-into existence of the rebirth consciousness in the three spheres of coming-into-existence. (A.III.II.iii.6 'Paṭṭhama-Bhava-Suttaṃ' ('First Coming-into-existence Sutta')) Please see above, p.48.

4 The Buddha explains that because the fool does not destroy ignorance and craving, he continues forming a rebirth consciousness. But destroying ignorance, the wise man discontinues formation of a rebirth consciousness. (S.II.i.ii.9 'Bāla-Paṇḍita-Suttaṃ' ('Fool-Wise Man Sutta'))

Without even a suggestion of a shadow of ambiguity, The Buddha explains how the formation of certain kinds of kamma through body, speech and mind leads to birth in certain worlds:<sup>1</sup>

**A fool who has given himself over to misconduct of body (*kāyena-du-ccaritaṃ*), misconduct of speech (*vācāya-du-ccaritaṃ*), misconduct of mind (*manasā-du-ccaritaṃ*), on the dissolution of the body, after death, is reborn in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, even in hell.**

**Were it rightly speaking to be said of anything: ‘That is utterly unwished for, utterly undesired, utterly disagreeable,’ it is of hell that (rightly speaking) this should be said....**

Then The Buddha explains the various kinds of suffering that the fool experiences in hell: transfixing with red-hot iron stakes, paring with axes and adzes, running across burning ground, up and down mounds of burning coals, and being cooked. In each case, The Buddha explains:

**There he feels painful, racking, piercing sensations, yet he does not die so long as that evil kamma (*pāpa-kammaṃ*) has not exhausted its result.**

Then The Buddha explains:

**Next, the wardens of hell throw him into the Great Hell (*Mahā-Nirayo*),<sup>2</sup>**

The Buddha explains also how the fool is reborn in the animal world:

- **There are, bhikkhus, animals that feed on grass. They eat by cropping fresh or dry grass with their teeth.**  
And what animals feed on grass? Elephants, horses, cattle, asses, goats, and deer, and any other such animals.  
A fool who formerly delighted in tastes here, and did evil actions (*pāpāni kammāni*) here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, is reborn in the company of animals that feed on grass.
- **There are, bhikkhus, animals that feed on excrement. They smell excrement from a distance, and run to it, thinking: ‘We can eat! We can eat!’...**  
And what animals feed on dung? Fowls, pigs, dogs, and jackals, and any other such animals.  
A fool who formerly delighted in tastes here, and did evil actions here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, is reborn in the company of animals that feed on excrement.
- **There are, bhikkhus, animals that are born, age, and die in darkness.**  
And what animals are born, age, and die in darkness? Moths, maggots, and earthworms, and any other such animals.  
A fool who formerly delighted in tastes here, and did evil actions here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, is reborn in the company of animals that are born, age, and die in darkness.
- **There are, bhikkhus, animals that are born, age and die in water.**  
And what are the animals that are born, age, and die in water? Fish, turtles, and crocodiles, and any other such animals.  
A fool who formerly delighted in tastes here, and did evil actions here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, is reborn in the company of animals that are born, live, and die in water.
- **There are, bhikkhus, animals that are born, age and die in filth.**  
And what are the animals that are born, age, and die in filth?  
Those animals that are born, age and die in a rotten fish, or in a rotten corpse, or in rotten dough, or in a cesspit or in a sewer.  
A fool who formerly delighted in tastes here, and did evil actions here, on the dissolution of the

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<sup>1</sup> M.III.iii.9 ‘*Bāla-Paṇḍita-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Fool-Wise-Man Sutta’)

<sup>2</sup> The Buddha describes the Great Hell in the subsequent sutta, M.III.iii.10 ‘*Deva-Dūta-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Divine Messenger Sutta’).

body, after death, is reborn in the company of animals that are born, age, and die in filth.

In many ways, bhikkhus, could I tell you about the animals kingdom, so much so that it is hard to find a simile for the suffering in the animals kingdom.

Then The Buddha explains when the fool is able to regain the human state:

Suppose, bhikkhus, a man were to throw a yoke with a single hole into the great ocean, and there were a blind turtle that would come to the surface once every hundred years.

What do you think, bhikkhus, would that blind turtle (coming to the surface once every hundred years) stick its neck into that yoke with the single hole?

(If it were to do so, Venerable Sir, it would be after only a very long time.)

Sooner, do I declare, would that blind turtle (coming to the surface once every hundred years) stick its neck into that yoke with the single hole than the fool who has gone to the nether world [would regain] the human state.

Why is that? Because here, bhikkhus, there is no conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, no righteous conduct, no wholesome activity, no meritorious activity.

Here, there prevails mutual devouring, the devouring of the weaker.

Just as it is not completely impossible for the blind turtle to stick its head into the yoke with the single hole, so is it not completely impossible for the fool to be reborn again as a human being. The Buddha explains:

If sometime or other, at the end of a long period, that fool comes back to the human state, it is into a low family that he is reborn: into a family of outcasts or hunters or bamboo-workers or cartwrights or scavengers, one that is poor with little to eat and drink, surviving with difficulty, where he scarcely finds food and clothing.

And he is ugly, unsightly, and misshapen, sickly, blind, cripple-handed, lame, or paralysed.

He gets no food, drink, clothes, vehicle, garlands, scents and unguents, bed, lodging, and light.

The Buddha then explains what invariably happens when the fool lives under such dreadful conditions:

He gives himself over to misconduct of body, misconduct of speech, and misconduct of mind. Having given himself over to misconduct of body, misconduct of speech, and misconduct of mind, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, even in hell.

The Buddha then explains that the destiny of the wise man is birth in heaven, against which the most superior earthly pleasures do not count at all. And The Buddha explains what invariably happens when the wise man (not everyone in other words) is reborn in the human state:

If, some time or other, at the end of a long period, the wise man comes back to the human state, it is into a high family that he is reborn: into a family of prosperous nobles, or prosperous Brahmins, or prosperous householders, one that is rich, of great wealth, of great possessions, with abundant gold and silver, with abundant assets and means, and with abundant money and grain.

He is handsome, comely and graceful, possessing the supreme beauty of complexion.

He obtains food and drink, clothes, vehicle, garlands, scents and unguents, bed, lodging, and light.

The Buddha explains what happens when the wise man lives under such good conditions:

He gives himself over to good conduct in body (*kāyena-su-caritaṃ*), good conduct in speech (*vācāya-su-caritaṃ*), and good conduct in mind (*manasā-su-caritaṃ*).

Having given himself over to good conduct in body, good conduct in speech, and good conduct in mind, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.

The Buddha explains also:<sup>3</sup>

I tell you this, bhikkhus, not as something I heard from another ascetic or Brahmin.

I tell you this as something that I have actually known, seen, and discovered for myself.

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<sup>3</sup> M.III.iii.10 '*Deva-Dūta-Suttam*' ('Divine Messenger Sutta')





(THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING: THE THIRD NOBLE TRUTH)

**N**ibbāna is the ultimate happiness.

(Dhp.xv.8 ‘*Sukha Vagga*’ (‘Happiness Chapter’))

**T**he Very Difficult to See to you, bhikkhus, I shall teach, and the path to the Very Difficult to See...  
And what is the Very Difficult to See?

The destruction of lust, the destruction of hatred, the destruction of delusion.

(S.IV.IX.ii.7 ‘*Suddasam-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Very Difficult to See Sutta’))

**A**nd what, bhikkhus,  
is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccam*)?

- With ignorance’s remainderless fading away and cessation (*avijjāya tveva asesā-virāga-nirodhā*),
- formation ceases (*saṅkhāra-nirodho*);
- with formation’s cessation, consciousness ceases (*saṅkhāra-nirodhā, viññāṇa-nirodho*);
- with consciousness’s cessation, mind-matter ceases (*viññāṇa-nirodhā, nāma-rūpa-nirodho*);
- with mind-matter’s cessation, the six bases cease (*nāma-rūpa-nirodhā, saḷ-āyatana-nirodho*);
- with the six bases’ cessation, contact ceases (*saḷ-āyatana-nirodhā, phassa-nirodho*);
- with contact’s cessation, sensation ceases (*phassa-nirodhā, vedanā-nirodho*);
- with sensation’s cessation, craving ceases (*vedanā-nirodhā, taṇhā-nirodho*);
- with craving’s cessation, clinging ceases (*taṇhā-nirodhā, upādāna-nirodho*);
- with clinging’s cessation, coming-into-existence ceases (*upādāna-nirodhā, bhava-nirodho*);
- with the cessation of coming-into-existence, birth ceases (*bhava-nirodhā, jāti-nirodho*);
- with birth’s cessation (*jāti-nirodhā*), ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation (*jarā-maraṇam, soka-parideva-*), pain, grief and despair cease (*dukkha-domanass-upāyāsā nirujjhanti*).

Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering (*evametassa kevalassa dukkhak-khandhassa nirodho hoti*).

This is called, bhikkhus (*idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave*), the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccam*).

(A.III.II.ii.1 ‘*Titth-Āyatana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Sectarian Doctrines Sutta’))



HAPPINESS VERY DIFFICULT TO SEE  
The Third Noble Truth

SCRATCH, SCRATCH, SCRATCH ..... 121

5 AGGREGATES	morality	HAPPINESS	The Buddha's	SIMILE	arahantship
identity view	restraint	sensual	modern orthodoxy	blind man	Nibbāna
seen as self		<del>sensual</del>		leper	WOUNDS
DEVELOPMENT	DHAMMA	ultimate	SENSUALITY	<del>SUFFERING</del>	6 bases
consumerism	true	HEALTH	<del>peace</del>	<del>eraving</del>	scratching of
meditation	<del>true</del>	body	view		

THE END OF THE WORLD ..... 133

BODHISATTA	<del>secret</del>	wisdom	<del>mystical</del>	SIMILE	suffering end
ariya	open	NIBBĀNA	<del>origin</del>	lotus	WORLD ORIGIN
DHAMMA	own effort	3 <sup>rd</sup> noble truth	<del>place</del>	WORLD END	contact
<del>mysticism</del>	IGNORANCE	<del>all formed</del>	<del>primordial essence</del>	birth end	identity view
<del>esoteric</del>	<del>beginning</del>	happiness sensed	<del>realm of existence</del>	ignorance end	ignorance
<del>exoteric</del>	LIGHT	<del>inner nature</del>	<del>sign</del>	matter end	Nibbāna
1 teaching	mind	<del>mind-matter</del>	world end	mind end	nonsense

SMASHING CASTLES MADE OF SAND ..... 147

ARAHANT	DELIGHT	IGNORANT MAN	= craving	yonder	dhmma easy
<del>delusion</del>	ageing&death	delights	= delight		eternity
<del>hatred</del>	birth	perceives 'mine'	ROOT	SIMILE	materialist
knows	suffering	perceives self	delight	sandcastles	modern
<del>lust</del>	IDENTITY VIEW		identity view	VIEW	monistic
	2 extremes	MAN	SHORE	annihilation	pluralistic
	definition	identity	hither		sensualist

THE WISE MAN'S ERRAND ..... 159

ELEMENT	<del>born</del>	<del>matter</del>	SAMSĀRA	SIMILE	ULTIMATE REALITY
formed	cessation	metaphors	<del>beginning</del>	burning	4fold
<del>formed</del>	<del>concealed</del>	<del>samsāra</del>	born	darkness	VIEW
Nibbāna	death	suffering	consciousness	light	arahant <del>dualities</del>
	<del>foundation</del>	wise man	fool	mountain	formed = <del>formed</del>
HAPPY	<del>formed</del>	REALITY	formed	ocean of tears	Nibbāna = consciousness
The Buddha	<del>ignorance</del>	conventional	similes	stick	Nibbāna = <del>samsāra</del>
NIBBĀNA	<del>jhāna</del>	ultimate			Nibbāna concealed
2fold					

STOPPED HAVE I AṄGULIMĀLA! YOU TOO STOP! (TABLE) ..... 174

OUT LIKE A CANDLE ..... 177

DHAMMA	&metaphysics	METAPHYSICS	identity view	MODERN SCIENCE	SIMILE
conclusion	&modern science	& dhamma	ignorance	issues	fire burning
empirical data	procedure	10 questions	modern science	conclusions	fire expired
the existent	recent research	62 views	self	metaphysics of	heartwood
identity view	<del>theses</del>	danger	wrong view	research	
the in-existent		delight		theses	

◻ ◻ ◻ ◻ ◻ PROGRESSIVE BUDDHIST CULTURE ..... 191

BHIKKHU	progress	bhikkhu	HOLY LIFE	SIMILE
The Buddha	<del>progress</del>	buddhist	14 fruits	bog, man in
displeased with	progressive	modern	dangers, future	dung
pleased with	selfish	service	failure	palace of wisdom
<del>cultured</del>	service	true buddhist	heartwood	
dozing in forest	triving in village	values	highest fruit	SOCIO-ECONOMIC
highest fruit		HAPPINESS		CONDITIONS
holy life	CULTURE	fame	MIRACLE	ancient india
instructor	3fold higher training	honour	3	modern society
involved in society	ancient india	renunciation		
preliminary culture				

SAVE COUNTLESS BEINGS.....

GOOD	KAMMA	OFFERINGS	<i>SAMSARA</i>	SIMILE	slaughterhouse
3fold	3 origins	5fold	endless	blind turtle	STATISTICS
HARM	happy existence	LATENCIES	endless decapitation	earth nail-tip	abstainers
3fold	happy existence	7	endless evil	saw	rebirth
conditions		eradicated		sea of blood	wise

Today's talk is the first of seven on the Third Noble Truth: the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccaṃ*).

The First Noble Truth is the Noble Truth of Suffering. The Second Noble Truth is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, which is craving. Hence, it follows that the cessation of suffering is found only by putting an end to the origin of suffering. The Buddha explains:<sup>1</sup>

**Cessation of suffering, as a Noble Truth, is this: it is the remainderless fading and ceasing, giving up, relinquishing, letting go and rejecting, of that same craving (*taṇhā*).**

We all wish for the cessation of suffering, do we not? Is there anyone in any realm of existence who does not wish for the cessation of suffering? And it is perhaps equally fair to say that all Buddhists know that by cessation of suffering, The Buddha means enlightenment, arahantship, Nibbāna. Many of us may even enunciate the wish for Nibbāna, but how many of us have sufficient understanding of suffering (the First Noble Truth) to imagine what it means that suffering has ceased? That is why the condition for suffering's cessation is wisdom, and The Buddha calls suffering's cessation the **Supreme Noble Wisdom** (*Paramā Ariyā-Paiññā*).<sup>2</sup> And arahantship, He calls the **Highest Thing** (*Agga-Dhamma*).<sup>3</sup>

Nibbāna is very often asked about, which is not surprising, for it is the end of The Buddha's Teaching. Hence, of the Four Noble Truths, The Buddha calls the Third Noble Truth the **Supreme Noble Truth** (*Paramaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ*),<sup>4</sup> and even calls it the **Destination** (*Parāyaṇaṃ*).<sup>5</sup> He explains:<sup>6</sup>

- ☉ **Enlightened is the Blessed One** (*buddho so Bhagavā*): **He teaches the Dhamma for enlightenment** (*bodhāya Dhammaṃ deseti*).
- ☉ **Tamed is the Blessed One** (*danto so Bhagavā*): **He teaches the Dhamma for taming oneself** (*damaṭhāya Dhammaṃ deseti*).
- ☉ **At Peace is the Blessed One** (*santo so Bhagavā*): **He teaches the Dhamma for the sake of peace** (*samathāya Dhammaṃ deseti*).
- ☉ **Crossed over is the Blessed One** (*tiṇṇo so Bhagavā*): **He teaches the Dhamma for crossing over** (*taraṇāya Dhammaṃ deseti*).
- ☉ **Attained to Nibbāna is the Blessed One** (*pari-nibbuto so Bhagavā*): **He teaches the Dhamma for attaining to Nibbāna** (*parinibbānāya Dhammaṃ deseti*).

One may say that the cessation of suffering is the end of all religions. But since the different religions have different views, different teachings, and different trainings, what they believe is the cessation of suffering is not what The Buddha has known and seen to be the cessation of suffering. Hence, The Buddha calls their path the untrue Dhamma (*a-sa-ddhamma*), whereas He calls the No-

<sup>1</sup> S.V.XII.ii.1 'Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ' ('Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta')

<sup>2</sup> M.III.iv.10 'Dhātu-Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ' ('Elements Analysis Sutta')

<sup>3</sup> A.VI.ix.9 'Agga-Dhamma-Suttaṃ' ('Highest Thing Sutta')

<sup>4</sup> M.III.iv.10 'Dhātu-Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ' ('Elements Analysis Sutta')

<sup>5</sup> S.IV.IX.ii.33 'Parāyana-Suttaṃ' ('Destination Sutta')

<sup>6</sup> M.I.iv.5 'Cūḷa-Saccaka-Suttaṃ' ('Small Saccaka Sutta')

ble Eightfold Path the True Dhamma (*Sa-Ddhamma*):<sup>7</sup> to compare the paths and destinations is to confuse them. The Buddha discussed it once with a wanderer called Māgaṇḍiya. The remainder of today's talk will be a discussion of that sutta: the 'Māgaṇḍiya Sutta'.<sup>8</sup>

The Buddha teaches that personal development is first of all achieved by restraint of the senses through morality and meditation. But the ancient texts according to which Māgaṇḍiya trained taught that personal development is to seek ever new experiences through the six senses: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.<sup>9</sup> This is the sensualist view, which is a wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) born of self-belief clinging (*attavād-upādānaṃ*), and is also called identity view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*). It manifests as sensual clinging (*kām-upādānaṃ*). The Buddha explains that there is identity view when:<sup>10</sup>

**Here, bhikkhu, an ignorant, common person (*assutavā puthujjano*), who has no regard for Noble Ones, and is in the Noble Dhamma unskilled (*Ariya-Dhammassa a-kovido*), and in the Noble Dhamma untrained (*Ariya-Dhamme a-viñīto*), who does not see True Men (*sa-ppurisānaṃ a-dassāvi*), and is in the True Men's Dhamma unskilled (*Sa-Ppurisa-Ddhammassa a-kovido*), and is in the True Men's Dhamma untrained (*Sa-Ppurisa-Dhamme a-viñīto*), sees matter as self, or sees self as having matter, or sees matter as in self, or sees self as in matter.**

And The Buddha explains that such an ignorant, common person sees also sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness in these four ways, and that is why The Buddha speaks of 'the five aggregates of clinging (*pañc-upādāna-kkhandhā*)': the ignorant, common person (the mandate-giving majority of the electorate) clings to the five aggregates as self.<sup>11</sup>

This being the case, it is inevitable that Māgaṇḍiya's ancient orthodoxy is the same as the modern orthodoxy of sixfold consumerism.<sup>12</sup> Māgaṇḍiya called The Buddha **a destroyer of development** (*bhūnahū*), and in the same way modern orthodoxy says morality and sense-restraint leads to *dukkha*, even mental imbalance, because it frustrates our natural development as human beings: the authority for these fallacious views is the modern so-called science of the mind, modern psychology. Modern orthodoxy says also morality and sense restraint go against the prosperity and development of society, for it is detrimental to the hallowed GNP: the authority is here the so-called science of economics. As always, when we look into the modern world with the eyes of the Dhamma, we see that modern orthodoxy is about as modern as the moon.

In response to Māgaṇḍiya's claim that The Buddha destroyed development,

<sup>7</sup> A.X.III.v.2 'Sa-Ddhamma-Suttaṃ' ('True Dhamma Sutta'). See also The Buddha's words from the *Dhammapada* and 'Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ', quoted p.229.

<sup>8</sup> M.II.iii.5 'Māgaṇḍiya-Suttaṃ' ('Māgaṇḍiya Sutta')

<sup>9</sup> Please see commentary to the sutta.

<sup>10</sup> M.III.i.9 'Mahā-Puṇṇama-Suttaṃ' ('Great Fullmoon-Night Sutta')

<sup>11</sup> For The Buddha's more detailed explanation of these four modes of identification, please see below, p.154ff.

<sup>12</sup> 'A CONSUMER society is one in which people frequently buy new goods, especially goods which are not essential, and which places a high value on owning many things.... CONSUMERISM... the state of advanced industrial society in which a lot of goods are bought and sold....' (CIDE)

The Buddha gave a simile:

Suppose, Māgaṇḍiya, there was a leper with sores and blisters on his limbs, being consumed by worms, scratching the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, [and] cauterizing his body over a burning charcoal pit. Then his friends and companions, his kinsmen and relatives, brought a doctor to treat him.

The doctor provided a remedy for him, and by means of that remedy, the man was cured of his leprosy, and became well and happy, independent, master of himself, able to go where he liked.

Before leprosy was master, and the man was leprosy's slave. When he was cured, however, he became his own master.

The Buddha then described how the now cured man might see another leper do as he used to do when he was leprosy:

What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Would that man envy the leper his burning charcoal pit or his taking a remedy?

(No, Master Gotama. Why so? Because when there is sickness, a remedy is required, and when there is no sickness, a remedy is not required.)

The slave who has achieved freedom does not envy another slave his captivity, does he?

Then The Buddha explained how He had as Prince Siddhattha enjoyed and sought the highest of pleasures through the senses. We must remember that before The Buddha became Buddha, he was the young prince Siddhattha, and there is nothing to suggest that his lifestyle was anything other than princely. It is, in fact, precisely because the prince enjoyed princely sensual pleasures, that The Buddha can truthfully say He knows sensuality's gratification.<sup>13</sup> But, says The Buddha:

On a later occasion, having understood as it actually is the origin, the disappearance, the gratification, the danger, and the escape in the case of sensuality, I abandoned craving for sensuality, I removed fever for sensuality, and I abide without thirst, with a mind inwardly at peace.<sup>14</sup>

Having understood sensuality, The Buddha became enlightened, found utter peace, and as an inevitable consequence gave up and escaped from sensuality.

Then The Buddha explained:

I see other beings who are not free from lust for sensual pleasure, being consumed by sensual craving, burning with the fever of sensuality, indulging in sensuality, and I do not envy them, nor do I delight therein. Why so?

Because there is, Māgaṇḍiya, a delight apart from sensuality, apart from unwholesome states, which surpasses divine bliss (*dibba-sukha*).

Since I take delight in that, I do not envy what is inferior, nor do I delight therein.

Imagine a bhikkhu on his almsround. Dogs come running along to bark at him and even bite him, he hears the radio or TV blare in every house and car, he hears the jingle of handphones, he sees the aggressive advertisements, he sees people going to work, and shopkeepers opening their shops, he is bustled by

<sup>13</sup> Please see The Buddha's explanation of His luxurious and aimless life as Prince Siddhattha A.III.I.iv.9 '*Sukhumāla-Suttaṃ*' ('Delicately Nurtured Sutta'), and M.I.iii.6 '*Ariya-Pariyesanā-Suttaṃ*' ('Noble Search Sutta': this sutta is also called '*Pāsa-Rāsi-Suttaṃ*' ('Mass of Snares Sutta')).

<sup>14</sup> For an analysis of this, The Buddha's fourfold understanding of sensuality, please see, for example, M.I.ii.3 '*Mahā-Dukkha-Kkhandha-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Mass of Suffering Sutta').



school children, and he waits again and again as people and cars cross his path: everyone scratching along towards continued ageing, sickness and death. When his bowl is full, he returns to his kuṭi, and spends the rest of the day and night in balmy solitude. Physically he is alone, slave only to The Buddha's balms of Vinaya and Dhamma. If he has jhāna, he may, when he wishes, abide in the complete self-mastery of jhāna: not a scratch by sight, sound, odour, flavour or touch, only balmy equanimity and one-pointedness.<sup>15</sup> If he is an arahant, he may abide in the utter peace of Nibbāna or the attainment of cessation (where there is not even any consciousness).<sup>16</sup> He may abide in one of these attainments until evening time, until the next morning, or even next week. Is he going to envy people their scratching about for ways to scratch their wounds? Is he going to envy people their New Year's scratching (and other celebratory scratchings), when ears, tongue, jaws, belly and mind fester with determined over-eating and determined prattle? As The Buddha says, he is not even going to envy the devas their more refined scratching.

To explain this, The Buddha extended his simile of the leper. He asked Māgaṇḍiya what would happen if a man cured of leprosy was grabbed by two strong men, and dragged towards a burning charcoal pit:

**What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Would that man twist his body this way and that?**

Just imagine. Two men want to roast you over a charcoal fire. Would you not try to get out of their grip? Māgaṇḍiya said:

**(Yes, Master Gotama. Why so? Because the fire is indeed painful to touch, hot and scorching.)**

And now comes the insight of a Buddha:

**What do you think Māgaṇḍiya? Is it only now that the fire is painful to touch, hot and scorching? Or previously too, was the fire painful to touch, hot and scorching?**

The Buddha is here asking whether the fire is hot only now that the man has been cured of his leprosy, or was it hot also previously, when he was leprosy.

(Master Gotama, that fire is now painful to touch, hot and scorching, and previously too the fire was painful to touch, hot and scorching. For when that man was a leper with sores and blisters on his limbs, being consumed by worms, scratching the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, his faculties were impaired. Thus, although the fire was actually painful to touch, he perceived it as pleasant.)

This is a good analysis, is it not? Māgaṇḍiya was not a complete fool. We perceive the scratches of sensual slavery as pleasant, because our faculties are impaired. Take, for example, the man who is slave to cigarettes, or the woman who is slave to the TV. Every now and then, their master calls, and they must obey. The man must smoke a cigarette, and the woman must turn on the TV: scratch, scratch, scratch. Whether they want to or not, they must obey their master and scratch, for they are slaves. And they think such a life of slavery is

<sup>15</sup> When one is in jhāna, there is no seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or touch, and in the fourth jhāna, there is only equanimity and one-pointedness.

<sup>16</sup> The attainment of cessation (*nirodha samāpatti*) is a meditative attainment wherein all mental activity ceases, including consciousness: according to one's previous determination, one may then come out of the attainment after maximum seven days. Only arahants and non-returners are able to enter this attainment. For details, please see Vis.xxiii.879 '*Nirodhasamāpatti Kathā*' ('Cessation-Attainment Explanation' PoP.43)

pleasant: in fact, they may even say it is a life of freedom and prosperity. Why so? Because, as Māgaṇḍiya said about the leper, their faculties are impaired.

It is for the same reason that many people think a bhikkhu's faculties are impaired, that he is confused and unhappy. They see him go barefoot for *piṇḍapāta*, they understand that he lives alone, away from home and society (he may even be a foreigner), that he eats only what he receives, that he does not eat after noon, does not have any money, does not go shopping, does not read the newspaper, does not watch TV, does not listen to music: in other words, he does not scratch, scratch, scratch as they do. Owing to their own impaired faculties, (and because they have never meditated), it is inconceivable to them that the bhikkhu can be happy, and they think: 'I certainly don't envy him his life.'<sup>17</sup> Sometimes this results in the bhikkhu's receiving misplaced sympathy, to which he can only reciprocate a greater and silent sympathy: as the one who knows slavery as slavery looks at the one who believes slavery is freedom.

The Buddha explains how such people's faculties are impaired:

**So too, Māgaṇḍiya, in the past sensual pleasures were painful to touch, hot and scorching; in the future sensual pleasures will be painful to touch, hot and scorching; and now at present, sensual pleasures are painful to touch, hot and scorching.**

**But these beings who are not free from lust for sensual pleasure, who are consumed by sensual craving, who burn with the fever of sensuality, have faculties that are impaired.**

**Thus, although sensual pleasure is actually painful to touch, they acquire a mistaken perception of it as pleasant.**

Here, we may protest. 'What! How can pleasures through the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body be compared to being scorched by fire?' 'Sensual pleasures are good!' 'Sensual pleasures provide joy in our lives!' Yes, yes, yes, that is what Old Scratch<sup>18</sup> (Māra) says.<sup>19</sup> But what does The Buddha say?

First, He extends the simile even further:

**Suppose, Māgaṇḍiya, there was a leper with sores and blisters on his limbs, being consumed by worms, scratching the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, [and] cauterizing his body over a burning charcoal pit.**

**The more he scratched the scabs and cauterized his body, the fouler, more stinking, and more infected became the openings of his wounds: yet, he would find a certain measure of satisfaction and enjoyment in scratching the openings of his wounds.**

**So too, Māgaṇḍiya, beings who are not free from lust for sensual pleasure, who are consumed by sensual craving, who burn with the fever of sensuality still indulge in sensuality.**

**The more such beings indulge in sensuality, the more their craving for sensual pleasures increases, and the more they are burned by the fever of sensuality: yet, they find a certain measure of satisfaction and enjoyment in dependence on the five strands of sensual pleasure.**

There: true or false? This is a perfect description of what Māgaṇḍiya and modern economics and political science call development: merely increased

<sup>17</sup> Here, the author mentioned that such people cannot conceive either that the bhikkhu may have given up a perfectly successful life as a layman, that he may in worldly terms be highly qualified. To them a bhikkhu is a loser.

<sup>18</sup> OLD SCRATCH: (British English) the devil, Māra

<sup>19</sup> Māra says: 'The eye is mine, ascetic, sights are mine, eye contact and its base of consciousness are mine. Where can you go, ascetic, to escape from me? The ear... nose... tongue... body... mind...' The Buddha's explains that where these things no longer exist (Nibbāna), there can Māra not go. (S.I.IV.ii.9 'Kassaka Suttaṃ' ('Farmer Sutta'))

dependence and enslavement by the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, without peace, and without end. Is there any party in the world that has said, will say or says now: ‘Enough! We want to abolish slavery! Disobey your thirst!’<sup>20</sup> We wish to devote the country’s resources towards self-mastery: peace of mind, and the end of rebirth. Our economic policy will be moderation and contentment, and the Minister for Sports will be replaced by a Minister for Meditation!’? It is impossible, for a party with such an agenda would not be given ear in the popular media, and the self-enslaved mandate-giving majority of the electorate would therefore scratch them off at once.

Why so? Because so long as one obeys one’s thirst, one cannot know what peace is.

**What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya?**

**Have you ever seen or heard of a king or a king’s minister enjoying himself, provided and endowed with the five strands of sensuality, who, without abandoning craving for sensual pleasure, without removing the fever of sensuality, was able to abide free from thirst, with a mind inwardly at peace, or who is able, or who will be able to abide so?**

We may reword The Buddha’s question: ‘What do you think? Have you ever seen or heard of a boy or girl, man or woman, who without abandoning the MODERN, progressive, active, consumerist lifestyle was able to abide free from thirst, with a mind inwardly at peace, or who is able, or who will be able to abide so?’ What is the answer? No. What was Māgaṇḍiya’s answer?

**(No, Master Gotama.)**

Nothing has changed: scratch past, scratch present, scratch future.

There are six bases, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, and The Buddha compares them to wounds.<sup>21</sup> In The Buddha’s day, no less than today, scratching one’s wounds made them fester, although today, with democracy, wound-scratching has been elevated into the palladium<sup>22</sup> of MODERN government: the orthodoxy is, so to speak, ‘the right to pursue the scratching of one’s wounds till they fester, stink, and become foul and infected.’<sup>23</sup> And the master slave-drivers, the scientists, are forever scratching their heads to develop new ways to scratch one’s wounds.

And why do we not know that scratching our wounds makes them fester? The Buddha explained it to Māgaṇḍiya:

**...those ascetics or Brahmins who have abided or abide or will abide free from thirst, with a mind inwardly at peace, all do so after having understood as they actually are, the origin, the disappearance,**

<sup>20</sup> The author is here alluding to a Pepsi Cola advertisement to be seen at the time on hoarding in Penang. It said: ‘Obey Your Thirst!’

<sup>21</sup> Please see also M.III.I.5 ‘*Sunakkhatta-Suttam*’ (Sunakkhatta is the name of The Buddha’s interlocutor), where The Buddha explains a simile: ‘“Wound” is a term for the six internal bases.’ And in A.XI.ii.7 ‘*Gopāla-Suttam*’ (‘Cowherd Sutta’), He compares sense-restraint to the dressing of wounds.

<sup>22</sup> PALLADIUM: ‘a statue of *Pallas* [Greek goddess Athene], on whose preservation the safety of Troy [city of ancient Asia Minor, now in what is considered Turkey] depended: anything of like virtue [CTCD]’ ‘object or principle with which the safety of something is regarded as bound up [POD].’

<sup>23</sup> Here, the author mentioned that one MODERN political dogma of sensualism is: ‘The right to pursue happiness.’

**the gratification, the danger, and the escape in the case of sensuality.**

**And it is after abandoning craving for sensual pleasure, and removing the fever of sensuality, that they abided or abide or will abide free from thirst, with a mind inwardly at peace.**

The danger of scratching one's wounds is suffering, the First Noble Truth. The gratification of scratching one's wounds is craving. The origin of one's scratching is ignorance. Craving and ignorance are the origin of suffering, the Second Noble Truth. The disappearance and escape from scratching one's wounds is the Third Noble Truth, Nibbāna. So long as there is ignorance about the suffering of scratching one's wounds, the origin of scratching one's wounds, and the cessation of scratching one's wounds, one will continue scratching one's wounds till they fester.

The cessation of scratching one's wounds, Nibbāna, and the path leading to cessation of scratching one's wounds was what The Buddha next spoke of with Māgaṇḍiya. He said:

**The greatest of all gains is health** (*ārogyaparamā lābhā*).

**Nibbāna is the ultimate happiness** (*Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ*).

And:

**The Eightfold Path is the best of paths** (*aṭṭhaṅgiko ca maggānaṃ*),

**For it leads to the Deathless** (*khemaṃ amatagāminan'ti*).

Māgaṇḍiya applauded these The Buddha's words, and then rubbed his limbs with his hands and said:

This is that health, Master Gotama, this is that Nibbāna; for I am now healthy and happy, and nothing afflicts me.

Māgaṇḍiya just concluded an intelligent discussion with the Buddha about the leper, and yet his faculties were so impaired that he did not understand he was himself a such leper. We do it all the time. We listen to the Dhamma, say: 'Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!' and then get up and go about our business exactly as before. Our view remains the same, because we think the Dhamma is merely a religion, a philosophy, a theory, with analyses and similes that have nothing to do with us: we think they have to do only with people in ancient India, not people in the modern world, not with the great developments that have taken place, what with modern science and modern socio-economic conditions.

But Māgaṇḍiya's Nibbāna, does it belong only to ancient India? Not at all. To identify self with the visible parts of the body (hair, skin and flesh), and then to see the youthful and so-called healthy body as Nibbāna is fundamental to the theology of modern orthodoxy.<sup>24</sup> And what is the body? It is without mind: mindless. We seek peace of mind and happiness in that which is without mind. It is like pulling at a cow's horn to get milk.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> These are all the earth element. Please see M.III.iv.10 'Dhātu-Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ' ('Element Analysis Sutta'). For The Buddha's analysis of the three conceits (youth, health and life), please see A.III.I.iv.9 'Sukhumāla-Suttaṃ' ('Delicately Nurtured Sutta'), and S.IV.I.iii.i.5 'Sey-yo-ham-asmi-Suttaṃ' ('Superior Am I Sutta').

<sup>25</sup> The author is here employing one of four similes used by The Buddha to explain that the wrong eightfold path cannot lead to the right fruits (M.III.iii.6 'Bhūmija-Suttaṃ' (Bhūmija is the bhikkhu who is The Buddha's interlocutor)).

The Buddha explained it to Māgaṇḍiya:

**Māgaṇḍiya, suppose there was a man born blind, who could not see dark and light forms, who could not see blue, yellow, red or pink forms, who could not see what was even and uneven, [and] who could not see the stars or the sun and moon.**

**He might hear a man with good eyesight say: ‘Good indeed, gentlemen, is a white cloth, beautiful, spotless and clean!’, and he [the blind man] might go in search of a white cloth.**

**Then a man fobbed him off with a dirty, soiled garment thus: ‘Good man, here is a white cloth for you, beautiful, spotless and clean.’**

**And he [the blind man] accepted it, and put it on, and being satisfied with it, he uttered words of satisfaction thus: ‘Good indeed, gentlemen, is a white cloth, beautiful, spotless and clean!’**

**What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? When that man born blind accepted that dirty, soiled garment, put it on, and being satisfied with it, uttered words of satisfaction thus: ‘Good indeed, gentlemen, is a white cloth, beautiful, spotless and clean!’ did he do so knowing and seeing, or out of faith in the man with good eyesight?**

(Venerable Sir, he would have done so unknowing and unseeing, out of faith in the man with good eyesight.)

What does the blind man say today? He listens to the radio and TV, and says: ‘Amazing indeed, gentlemen, are the scientific developments that have taken place in the last three hundred years: one day we shall have Nibbāna on earth, beautiful, spotless and clean!’ Who fobbed him off with this view? The media and modern science, in other words, business interests. The media and modern science are not for education, but for business. Hence, the criterion for modern censorship is popular demand: scratch the most people, make the most money. Popular demand rules the media, the political arena and education. It is dictatorship by the blind and ignorant media-manipulated mandate-giving majority of the electorate. And although there is freedom of speech, only popular speech is given ear by the media. If a Buddha appeared today, He would not get a word in edgeways. So much for freedom and democracy.

The blind man accepts the popular views in the media, adopts them, and is satisfied with them. Does he do it knowing and seeing, or out of blind faith? He does it unknowing and unseeing, out of the blind, unquestioning, naïve faith and gullibility that is the life-blood of modern science. Modern science has not even scratched the surface of suffering; it has in most cases aggravated suffering, and has in all cases compounded it with increased nescience about suffering, the cause of suffering, the escape from suffering, and the way to the escape from suffering. Modern science views namely suffering as merely a question of political and material engineering: the political engineering is to scratch out all differences between things, to make all things equal and therefore good (actions, people, conceits, views, religions, paths to Nibbāna, Nibbānas, etc.), and the material engineering is to fill the bottomless abyss that is our craving through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. These are the promises, the will-be’s. What are we fobbed off with? Unprecedented material and mental confusion: unprecedented impairment of the faculties (scratch, scratch, scratch), with the blind voting for the blind out of blind faith in their alleged vision.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> VISION: ‘the ability to see... a vision can be a religious experience or it can be caused by mental illness or by taking drugs... the ability to imagine how a country, society, industry, etc. will

The Buddha explained this blindness to Māgaṇḍiya:

**...although this body, Māgaṇḍiya, is a disease, a tumour, a dart, a calamity, and an affliction, referring to this body, you say: ‘This is that health, Master Gotama, this is that Nibbāna.’**

**You do not have that Noble Vision (*Ariyena-Cakkhunā*) by means of which you might know health and see Nibbāna.**

In other words: ‘You speak as if you had knowledge of Nibbāna, but you neither have the faintest inkling of what Nibbāna is, nor possess the ability to have any such inkling.’<sup>27</sup>

With these words of The Buddha, Māgaṇḍiya’s *pāramī* came into play, for now he abandoned his benighted view, and asked The Buddha please to teach him in order that he might know health and see Nibbāna. The Buddha refused. He said a doctor might treat the blind man without success, and that would be tiresome for the doctor: in this case, tiresome for The Buddha... Māgaṇḍiya repeated his request for Dhamma.

Then The Buddha explained that if the blind man’s blindness were cured, he would see the dirty garment for what it was, and lose interest in it. And he might become very angry at the man who had fobbed him off with the dirty garment.

**So too, Māgaṇḍiya, if I were to teach you the Dhamma thus: ‘This is that health, this is that Nibbāna’, you might know health, and see Nibbāna.**

**Together with the arising of your vision, your desire and lust for the five aggregates of clinging might be abandoned.**

The Buddha here explained that Māgaṇḍiya might come to know health and see Nibbāna: he might know and see the danger of scratching, the origin of scratching, and the escape from scratching. He might lose his desire and lust for scratching; he might cease to see the five aggregates of clinging as self; he might see that the five aggregates are only the five aggregates: matter, sensation, perception, formations and consciousness.

**Then perhaps you might think: ‘Indeed, I have long been tricked, cheated, and defrauded by this mind. For when clinging, I have been clinging to only matter, I have been clinging to only sensation, I have been clinging to only perception, I have been clinging to only formations, I have been clinging to only consciousness.**

**My clinging is the condition for coming into existence, coming into existence is the condition for birth, birth is the condition for ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Such is the origin of suffering.’**

Here, The Buddha explained that Māgaṇḍiya might see that whereas he thought he was clinging to self, he had been fobbed off with only the five aggregates, existence, rebirth, and suffering. It is merely another way of saying that Māgaṇḍiya might see that whereas he thought he was clinging to an eternal self, he had been fobbed off with dependently originated ignorance, formation,

develop in the future and to plan in a suitable way. • *He didn’t have the mental agility or vision required of a senior politician. ...As a prime minister, he lacked the strategic vision of, say, someone like Churchill. [CIDE]’ ‘a statesman of... vision. [OALD]’*

<sup>27</sup> Here, the author mentioned that The Buddha very often delays teaching to wanderers, so as to humble their pride. When their pride is humbled, their faith is the greatest, and then is their mind the most receptive to His Word. To leap into an explanation to someone who holds another view most often defeats the purpose, and what ensues is a conversation rather than a teaching.

consciousness, mind-matter, six bases, contact, sensation, craving.<sup>28</sup>

Again Māgaṇḍiya asked The Buddha to cure him of his blindness, and teach him how to know health and see Nibbāna.

Now The Buddha said:

**Then, Māgaṇḍiya, associate with true men**(*sa-ppurise*).

True men follow The Buddha, which means they practise His Dhamma, the True Dhamma (*Sa-Ddhamma*), for the attainment of Nibbāna. Nibbāna can be attained only by practice of the True Dhamma, which is The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path: morality (*sīla*) (Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood), concentration (*samādhi*) (Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration), wisdom (*paññā*) (Right View, Right Intention).<sup>29</sup>

**When you associate with true men, you will hear the True Dhamma** (*Sa-Ddhamma*).

Because true men practise the True Dhamma, they also speak the True Dhamma. They do not lead astray.

**When you hear the True Dhamma, you will practise in accordance with the True Dhamma.**

If we listen to the True Dhamma, our practice will be up to scratch: it will be the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path.

**When you practise in accordance with the True Dhamma, you will know and see for yourself: 'These [the five aggregates] are diseases, tumours, and darts; but here these diseases, tumours, and darts cease without remainder. My clinging's cessation is coming-into-existence's cessation, coming-into-existence's cessation is birth's cessation, birth's cessation is ageing&death's, sorrow's, lamentation's, pain's, grief's, and despair's cessation. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.'**

Practice of the True Dhamma leads to Nibbāna:<sup>30</sup> if not, it is not the True Dhamma. When we practise according to the True Dhamma, we scratch away ignorance, which means we scratch away suffering, the wounds are healed, we become our own master, which means we attain Nibbāna.

With this advice from The Buddha, Māgaṇḍiya's faith leapt forward: he requested and got ordination as a bhikkhu. Having received the initial training for bhikkhus from the true men that were his fellow bhikkhus, He then withdrew to the forest, to solitude, and practised diligently according to the True Dhamma. And then he realized the supreme goal of the holy life, for which men ordain as bhikkhus: he became an arahant. Just as the Buddha knew under the Bodhi Tree,<sup>31</sup> so did Māgaṇḍiya know:

<sup>28</sup> Here, The Buddha refers first to the five aggregates (matter, sensation, perception, formation and consciousness), and then He analyses their origin according to dependent origination. Ignorance, formation, consciousness, mind-matter, six bases, contact, sensation, and craving are the factors of dependent origination that precede clinging, which The Buddha refers to here as the five aggregates that are clung to.

<sup>29</sup> For true men, please see, for example, M.III.ii.3 '*Sa-Ppurisa-Suttaṃ*' ('True Man Sutta'). For the True Dhamma explained as the Noble Eightfold Path with the 'Right' (*Sammā*) eight factors, please see A.X.III.v.3 '*Sa-Ddhamma-Suttaṃ*' ('True Dhamma Sutta'). True men are mentioned al-  
so above, when explaining that failure to associate with such is a nutriment of ignorance.

<sup>30</sup> The Buddha explains that it is like when a hen has sat on her eggs in the proper manner: the chicks will hatch for that reason, regardless of her wishes. M.II.i.3 '*Sekha-Suttaṃ*' ('Trainee Sutta')

<sup>31</sup> The Buddha explains His own enlightenment in the same terms. Please see quotation below,

**'Birth is destroyed**(*khīṇā jāti*),  
**'the holy life has been lived**(*vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ*),  
**'what had to be done has been done**(*kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ*),  
**'there is no more coming into any state of being**(*nāparaṃ itthattāyā*).'

Thank you.





Today's talk is the second of seven on the Third Noble Truth: the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccam*), which is the attainment of Nibbāna, arahantship.

As mentioned last time, the cessation of suffering may be seen as the end of all religions. According as the religion's doctrines are, so is its view of the end of suffering. Last time, we discussed Nibbāna according to the views of the religion of sensualism and material development: modern orthodoxy. We shall today look at some more views of Nibbāna, because a very good way to begin to understand what Nibbāna is, is to understand what it is not.

First of all, there is the view that Nibbāna can be attained through all 'spiritual' practices. This is the 'open-minded' view, the democratic, politically correct view of Nibbāna: 'All paths to Nibbāna are equal; all Nibbānas are equal. No need to think The Buddha's teachings are so unique. No need to be so élitist.' You have all heard this kind of view, have you not? It has accordingly now become offensive even to speak of a 'religion': one must now speak of a 'spiritual tradition', as if it were a matter of just taste and circumstance. It is the inevitable result of sensualism.<sup>1</sup>

Once a wanderer, Subhadda, asked The Buddha about all the famous teachers of the time:<sup>2</sup>

**(Have they all realized the truth as they all suggest, or has one of them realized it, or have some realized it, and some not?)**

The Buddha answered:

**Enough, Subhadda, never mind whether all, or none, or some of them have realized the truth: I will teach you the Dhamma.**

And The Buddha explained:

**In whatever Dhamma-Vinaya the Noble Eightfold Path is not found** (*Ariyo Aṭṭhaṅgiko Maggo na upalabbhati*),

**[1] there no [one] ascetic is found** (*samaṇopi tattha na upalabbhati*).

**[2] There no second ascetic is found** (*dutiyoopi tattha samaṇo na upalabbhati*).

**[3] There no third ascetic is found** (*tatiyoopi tattha samaṇo na upalabbhati*).

**[4] There no fourth ascetic is found** (*catutthopi tattha samaṇo na upalabbhati*).

This means that without the Noble Eightfold Path there is no stream-enterer, no once-returner, no non-returner and no arahant, which means there is no attainment of Nibbāna, the end of suffering.

That is why the condition for a bodhisatta's attainment of arahantship and Buddhahood is his discovering and practising the Noble Eightfold Path, discovering dependent origination. The Buddha explains:<sup>3</sup>

**The Tathāgata, bhikkhus, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One, is of the unarisen path the arouser** (*an-uppannassa maggassa uppādetā*), **is of the unproduced path the producer** (*a-sañjātassa maggassa*

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<sup>1</sup> For an analysis of ethical sensualism, please see below, p.157.

<sup>2</sup> D.ii.3 'Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttam' ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta')

<sup>3</sup> S.III.I.II.6 'Sammā-Sambuddha-Suttam' ('Perfectly Enlightened One Sutta')

*sañjanetā*), is of the undeclared path the declarer (*an-akkhātassa maggassa akkhātā*).

The Buddha explains further:<sup>4</sup>

...bhikkhus, I saw the ancient path, the ancient road travelled by the Perfectly Enlightened Ones of the past.

And what is that ancient path, that ancient road? It is just this Noble Eightfold Path.... I followed that path, and by doing so, I have directly known

[1] ageing&death [the First Noble Truth],

[2] its origin [the Second Noble Truth],

[3] its cessation [the Third Noble Truth],

[4] and the way leading to its cessation [the Fourth Noble Truth].

In the same way, explains The Buddha, the bodhisatta directly knew birth, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation, as well as coming-into-existence, clinging, craving, sensation, contact, the six bases, mind and matter, consciousness, and formations, their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to their cessation.

It is when he in this way rediscovers the Dhamma (the Four Noble Truths) that a bodhisatta in his last life becomes an arahant and Buddha.

Hence, it is only when a Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha has arisen in the world that the Noble Eightfold Path as a teaching also exists in the world. The Noble Eightfold Path is unique to a Buddha's Teaching, because (according to The Buddha Himself), the path to the cessation of suffering is exclusive to a Buddha's Teachings.

This The Buddha explained to the wanderer Subhadda in no uncertain terms:

**In this very Dhamma-Vinaya, Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is found (*upalabbhati*). Here only (*idh-eva*), Subhadda, is the [first] ascetic (*samaṇo*), here the second ascetic (*idha dutiyo samaṇo*), here the third ascetic (*tatiyo samaṇo*), here the fourth ascetic (*idha catuttho samaṇo*).**

The Buddha said very clearly, **here only** (*idh-eva*). He said, **here only** (*idh-eva*).

To make quite sure that Subhadda understood what **here only** (*idh-eva*) means, The Buddha asserted that outside the *Buddhasāsana* there is no one who has or will attain the cessation of suffering:<sup>5</sup>

Devoid are other teachings of ascetics (*suññā para-ppavādā samaṇebhi aññehi*).

It is as a vehicle for His teachings that a Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha establishes a Sangha: a Sangha for men and later women to be able to devote themselves full-time to becoming either the first ascetic, the second ascetic, the third ascetic or the supreme ascetic of all, the fourth ascetic, the arahant.

And this takes place only when the previous Buddha *Sāsana* has come to an end. The Buddha explains:<sup>6</sup>

**It is impossible, it cannot happen that two arahants (*dve arahanto*), Perfectly Enlightened Ones (*Sammā-Sambuddhā*), should arise at the same time in one world-system: there is no such possibility.**

This is why it is impossible for Pacceka Buddhas to arise within a *Buddha-Sāsana*. And this is also why it is impossible for a bodhisatta to be an *Ariya* of

<sup>4</sup> S.II.I.vii.5 '*Nagara-Suttaṃ*' ('City Sutta')

<sup>5</sup> Please see the full quotation, p.229.

<sup>6</sup> A.I.xv.1 '*Bahu-Dhātuka-Suttaṃ*' ('Text of the Impossible')

any kind. Why so? Because, The Buddha explains that one of the factors of stream-entry is full confidence in The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.<sup>7</sup> Thus, if a bodhisatta were an *Ariya* before becoming an arahant and Buddha, he would be possessed of full confidence in something he had neither seen nor heard about: to have full confidence in something that one has neither seen nor heard about is not a sign of wisdom, but a sign of delusion.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, if our bodhisatta were to have been an *Ariya* before becoming an arahant and Buddha, he would already have had a Buddha's Dhamma (a Noble Eightfold Path) as teacher, which means there would have been no conceivable reason for him to go first to two other teachers (the goal of whose teachings he rejected as not leading to Nibbāna) and there would have been no reason for him then to practise futile austerities for six years.<sup>9</sup> If a bodhisatta is to become an arahant and Buddha, is to rediscover the Dhamma (again originate the Noble Eightfold Path), and is to re-establish the Sangha, he cannot already be possessed of full confidence in, and therefore full knowledge of The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. A coffee-bush does not yield steaming cups of coffee with cream, sugar, a saucer and a silver spoon; a coffee bush yields raw, unprocessed coffee beans: that is the law of nature.

Hence, when referring to Himself before His enlightenment, The Buddha says always:<sup>10</sup>

**before my enlightenment** (*pubbeva sambodhā*), **while I was still only an unenlightened Bodhisatta** (*an-abhi-sambuddhassa bodhisattasseva*)....

The Noble Eightfold Path is the condition for the Bodhisatta's enlightenment, his arahantship and Buddhahood: it is so for everyone's and anyone's attainment of Nibbāna. What then is the condition for practice of the Noble Eightfold Path? Right View (*Sammā-Diṭṭhi*). The Buddha explains:<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> S.V.XI.i.1 '*Cakka-Vatti Rāja-Suttaṃ*' ('Wheel-Turning King Sutta')

<sup>8</sup> On the night of his enlightenment, the bodhisatta will of necessity first attain the Path and Fruition of stream-entry, once-return, and non-return, and the arahant path (*arahatta-magga*), before he attains the arahant fruition (*arahatta-phala*). This will have taken place towards the close of the third watch of the night of his enlightenment, during which brief time he will then be an *ariya*: at the end of the watch, He is Buddha: 'When it [my mind] was liberated, there came the knowledge: "It is liberated." I understood: "Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, done is what had to be done, there is no more coming to any state of existence."' This was the third true knowledge attained by me, in the third watch of the night.' (M.I.i.4 '*Bhaya-Bherava-Suttaṃ*' ('Fear and Dread Sutta')) The author is not referring to this brief state, but to the imagined (im)possibility that a bodhisatta might have attained a Path and Fruition before the night of his enlightenment, either in a previous life, or earlier in the same last life. Such a wrong view is nothing new, and can be found refuted in *Kathā Vatthu* iv.8 (*Points of Controversy*), of the *Abhi-dhamma Piṭaka*.

<sup>9</sup> After his renunciation, Prince Siddhattha studied under the two teachers Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta. He learned how to develop the four material jhānas, and four immaterial jhānas. Knowing this not to be Nibbāna, he left them, and undertook severe austerities for six years. Only after this, did he sit under the Bodhi Tree and discover the Four Noble Truths (please see e.g. M.I.iii.6 '*Ariya-Pariyesanā-Suttaṃ*' ('Noble Search Sutta')).

<sup>10</sup> e.g. M.I.iii.6 '*Ariya-Pariyesanā-Suttaṃ*' ('Noble Search Sutta'): also called '*Pāsa-Rāsi-Suttaṃ*' ('Mass of Snare Sutta'), and M.I.iv.6 '*Mahā-Saccaka-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Saccaka Sutta').

<sup>11</sup> M.III.ii.7 '*Mahā-Cattārīsaka-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Forties Sutta')

Therein, bhikkhus, Right View comes first. And how does Right View come first?

One understands wrong view (*micchā-ditṭhi*) as wrong view, and Right view as Right view: this is one's Right View.

This means that we must first of all understand what is what. On a higher level, of course, The Buddha is here referring to our enlightened and enlightening understanding of ultimate reality. But even before we get that far, we need to have the rudimentary right view of someone who has taken refuge in The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. This means we need to have sufficient Right View about Nibbāna (the end of suffering), so as to know that it is the end of ignorance and rebirth.

The Buddha explains that unless there is Right View:

- There cannot be Right Speech, -Action, and -Livelihood.
- There cannot be Right Effort, -Mindfulness, and -Concentration.
- There cannot be Right View, and -Intention.

As a result, explains The Buddha, there cannot be the ninth and tenth factors of the arahant's Tenfold Path:<sup>12</sup> Right Knowledge (*Sammā-Ñāṇa*) and Right Liberation (*Sammā-Vimutti*).<sup>13</sup>

It is quite straightforward: morality is difficult for us to develop and maintain, because it involves restraint and control of our natural impulses. In the same way, concentration goes against nature. And wisdom is the most difficult of all, for we need to study hard to understand The Buddha's deep Dhamma, and we need to meditate hard to know it and see it: our natural ignorance is deep-seated. If Nibbāna (the end of suffering) could be attained in another, easier way, then clearly The Buddha would have given that other way instead. The reason He did not do so, however, is that there is no other way: the laws of nature do not obey the dogmas of Political Correctness. Buddhas do not invent the Noble Eightfold Path, they rediscover it.

Hence, we may understand how important it is that we have sufficient Right View about the one path to Nibbāna (the end of suffering), the nature of the one Nibbāna, and the attainment of the one Nibbāna. Otherwise, says the Buddha, we may practise the Dhamma of untrue men (*a-sappurisa-dhammo*),<sup>14</sup> we may walk the dark path (*kaṇha-maggo*),<sup>15</sup> the ignoble path (*an-ariyo-maggo*),<sup>16</sup> we may walk Māra's eightfold wrong path (*aṭṭh-aṅgika micchā-magga*).<sup>17</sup> Where does such a path lead? It leads to continued ignorance, rebirth, ageing, sickness and death: not Nibbāna, the end of all that.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> The Noble Eightfold Path is discussed under 'Absolute Discrimination', p.233.

<sup>14</sup> A.X.III.v.4 '*Sa-Ppurisa-ddhamma-Suttaṃ*' ('True-Man Dhamma Sutta') Here, The Buddha explains that the eight factors of the untrue man's Dhamma are all wrong (*micchā*).

<sup>15</sup> A.X.III.v.2 '*Kaṇha-Magga-Suttaṃ*' ('Dark Path Sutta') Here, The Buddha explains that the eight factors of the dark path are all wrong (*micchā*).

<sup>16</sup> A.X.III.v.1 '*Ariya-Magga-Suttaṃ*' ('Noble Path Sutta') Here, The Buddha explains that the eight factors of the ignoble path are all wrong (*micchā*).

<sup>17</sup> M.I.ii.9 '*Dvedhā-Vitakka-Suttaṃ*' ('Two Kinds of Thought Sutta') Here, The Buddha explains that Māra lays out a wrong eightfold path.

<sup>18</sup> For the destination of the wrong and right paths, please see also The Buddha's explanation be-

Let us take then some further steps down The Buddha's Eightfold Path, and look at some of the things we need further to understand about Nibbāna, and the attainment of Nibbāna.

First of all, we need to understand that Nibbāna is not a place. There was once a young deva, Rohitassa, who asked The Buddha if the end of the world (the end of suffering and rebirth) was a place that could be reached by travelling through the universe. The Buddha's reply was clear:<sup>19</sup>

**As to that end of the world, friend, where one is not born, does not age, does not die, does not pass away, and is not reborn: I say that it cannot be known, seen or reached by travelling.**

This means that the end of the world (the end of birth and suffering) is not to be found out there somewhere in the infinite universe (to the North, the South, the West, or the East): the end of the world is to be found only when there is the end of formations, the end of mind-matter. The Buddha explained to Rohitassa:

**But not, friend, without having reached the end of the world (*lokassa antaṃ*) is suffering put an end to (*dukkhassa anta-kiriyaṃ*), I declare.**

Rohitassa meant an end of the world in the universe out there; The Buddha means an end of the world that constitutes our universe, in here:<sup>20</sup> The Buddha means the mental and material formations that are our body and mind,<sup>21</sup> the five aggregates that are the endless round of rebirth, that are the First Noble Truth: suffering.

The Buddha explained to Rohitassa:

**It is friend, in just this fathom-long carcass<sup>22</sup> (*byāmamatte kaḷevare*) endowed with perception (*sa-saññimhi*) and mind (*sa-manake*) that I make known**

**[1] the world [*lokañca*/1st Noble Truth],**

**[2] and the origin of the world [*loka-samudayañca*/2nd Noble Truth],**

**[3] and the cessation of the world [*loka-nirodhañca*/3rd Noble Truth],**

**[4] and the way leading to the cessation of the world<sup>23</sup> [*loka-nirodha-gāminiñca paṭipada*/4th Noble Truth]**

Our carcass is matter (*rūpa*). Perception (*saññā*) and mind (*mano*) are mind (*nāma*). Our mind-matter (*nāma-rūpa*) is the only place where we may discover the Four Noble Truths, and only by understanding the Four Noble Truths, may we reach the end of mind-matter, which is the end of birth and suffering, the end of the world.

Believing that Nibbāna (the end of birth and suffering) is a place may manifest also as the wrong view that Nibbāna is a realm of existence. We may think:

low, p.168.

<sup>19</sup> S.I.II.iii.6 'Rohitassa-Suttaṃ' (Rohitassa is the name of the deva who asks.) Please see also A.IV.I.v.5&6. For a more detailed explanation, please see S.IV.I.III.ii.3 'Lokanta-Gamana-Suttaṃ' ('World's End Going Sutta'). A variant and in some ways more detailed explanation is found in also A.IX.iv.8 'Lokāyatika-Suttaṃ' ('Philosopher Sutta').

<sup>20</sup> Here, the author pointed at his heart.

<sup>21</sup> Please see the commentary for this explanation.

<sup>22</sup> CARCASS: mere body (POD)

<sup>23</sup> In explaining that The Buddha is *loka-vidu* (Knower of Worlds), the *Visuddhi Magga* (*Path of Purification*) first of all refers to this The Buddha's explanation to Rohitassa (Vis.vii PoP.36)

‘Yes, I know all things in the world are impermanent and suffering, and I know Nibbāna is not. That means Nibbāna must be that unique, most superior, mystical<sup>24</sup> heaven beyond the world, with eternal happiness, where one is reborn to live forever and ever. Hooray!’

The Buddha explains how there was once a Brahmā, Baka, who thought this of his realm of existence. He thought:<sup>25</sup>

**This is permanent, this is everlasting, this is eternal, this is total, this is not subject to pass away, for this neither is born, nor ages, nor passes away, nor reappears, and beyond this there is no escape.**

To this, The Buddha said: **The worthy Baka the Brahmā has lapsed into ignorance.**

Such a lapse comes naturally, for it corresponds to our benighted dream. It is driven by self-belief clinging (*attavād-upādānaṃ*) (identity view (*sakkāya-dīṭṭhi*)) as a manifestation of the eternity wrong view (*sassata-dīṭṭhi*).<sup>26</sup> In a place like the Brahmā realm, the misconception comes even more naturally, for there all is bliss, and the life-span is very, very long.

To the confused Brahmā, The Buddha then explained the attainment of Nibbāna:

**Consciousness invisible (*viññāṇaṃ ani-dassanaṃ*), endless (*an-antaṃ*), all-radiant (*sabbato pabhaṃ*), not of the nature of earth<sup>27</sup>... water... fire... air... beings... devas... Brahmās... not of the nature of the All.<sup>28</sup>**

Earth, water, fire and air are matter (*rūpa*), and beings, devas, and Brahmās are mind-matter (*nāma-rūpa*),<sup>29</sup> and the All includes everything, including mind-matter. But Nibbāna is devoid of these things: it is devoid of the features of matter, and devoid of the features of mind-matter. Thus Nibbāna is devoid even of light and darkness.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>24</sup> MYSTIC [-AL]: ‘believing in the spiritual apprehension of truths intellectually incomprehensible; spiritually symbolic, esoteric, mysterious. [POD]’ ‘sacredly obscure or secret: involving a sacred or a secret meaning hidden from the eyes of the ordinary person, only revealed to a spiritually enlightened mind. [CTCD]’ ‘of hidden meaning or spiritual power, especially in religion [OALD]

<sup>25</sup> Please see M.I.v.9 ‘*Brahma-Nimantanika-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Brahma Invitation Sutta’)

<sup>26</sup> For self-belief clinging please see The Buddha’s explanation above, p.124.

<sup>27</sup> The Pali is *pathaviyā pathavattena* = with the earthness of earth; *an-anubhūtaṃ* = by the commentary explained as *not reached by earth* (not co-extensive), and by the sub-commentary explained as ‘its nature is not shared in common with earth’ (not co-essential). Here, the author chose to render it *not of the nature of earth*, since earthness is the nature of earth, which the sub-commentary confirms.

<sup>28</sup> The commentary to this sutta explains Nibbāna as ‘invisible mind (*nāma*) that is cognized.’ Although Nibbāna is neither mind (*nāma*) nor matter (*rūpa*), it is here described as such in that it is the object of consciousness. A clear explanation of this may be found in the Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi’s *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. He explains (p.324): *Nibbāna is called nāma solely in the sense of causing* [the immaterial aggregates: sensation, perception, mental formations and consciousness] *to bend. For Nibbāna causes faultless states – that is, the supramundane cittas* [consciousnesses] *and cetasikas* [mental factors that are associated with the consciousnesses] – *to bend on itself...*

<sup>29</sup> For The Buddha’s explanation of Man/a being, please see below, p.152.

<sup>30</sup> In A.VI.vi.3 ‘*Chaḷa-Bhijāti-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Six Breeds Sutta’), The Buddha explains that Nibbāna is ‘un-dark’ (*a-kaṇhaṃ*) and ‘un-light’ (*a-sukkaṃ*).

To a layman called Kevaṭṭa, The Buddha once explained Nibbāna:<sup>31</sup>

**Here water, earth, fire, and air have no footing; here long and short, coarse and fine, fair and foul, mind and matter too** (*nāmañca rūpañca*), **all are brought to an end** (*asesaṃ uparujjhati*).

All these terms are included in the last two: mind (*nāma*) and matter (*rūpa*). Thus, Nibbāna is not mind-matter, Nibbāna does not possess mind-matter, Nibbāna is not in mind-matter, and mind-matter is not in Nibbāna. Nibbāna is pure of mind-matter, pure of formations of any kind: it is Unformed (*Asaṅkhata*).<sup>32</sup> That is why it is not Nibbāna that is invisible, endless and radiant, but the consciousness that knows and sees Nibbāna. And how does this come about?

When we develop jhāna, our mind becomes purer and purer, because the defilements are suppressed to a greater and greater degree. Our mind becomes purer also when we practise Vipassanā, because ignorance is suppressed. The purity of the mind manifests as radiance and luminosity. The Buddha refers to it, when He says:<sup>33</sup>

**Radiant, bhikkhus, is this mind**<sup>34</sup> (*pabhassaram-idam, bhikkhave, cittaṃ*), **and it is by incoming defilements defiled** (*āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkilittam*).

**Radiant, bhikkhus, is this mind; and it is of incoming defilements relieved.**

This radiance is also what The Buddha refers to when He speaks of the radiance of wisdom (*paññā-pabhā*):<sup>35</sup>

**There are, bhikkhus, four radiances. What four?**

**The radiance of the moon, of the sun, of fire, and of wisdom.**<sup>36</sup>

The best and clearest way to understand it is to develop concentration: even before we have attained jhāna, the mind becomes relieved of defilements, and, so to speak, its natural radiance comes to light. And since Nibbāna is pure of features, the purest consciousness is (needless to say) the one that knows and sees Nibbāna: the mind is then at its most radiant, its most luminous. That is why, also when He describes His attaining Buddhahood, The Buddha speaks of the mind's being completely bright (*pari-odāta*):<sup>37</sup>

**When my concentrated mind** (*samāhite citte*) **was thus completely purified** (*pari-suddhe*) **completely bright** (*pari-odāte*), **unblemished** (*an-aṅgaṇe*), **rid of imperfection** (*vigat-ūpakkilese*), **malleable** (*mudubhūte*), **wieldy** (*kammaniye*), **steady** (*thite*), **attained to imperturbability** (*āneñja-ppatte*).

[1] I directed it to knowledge of the recollection of past lives....

[2] I directed it to knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings.

[3] I directed it to knowledge of the destruction of the taints.

<sup>31</sup> D.i.11 'Kevaṭṭa-Suttam' ('Kevaṭṭa is the name of The Buddha's interlocutor.)

<sup>32</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of the formed and unformed element, please see quotation below, p.167.

<sup>33</sup> A.I.v 'Pañihita-Accha Vaggo' ('Directed & Clear Chapter')

<sup>34</sup> The commentary explains that this means the consciousness is possessed completely of radiance (*pabhā*).

<sup>35</sup> A.IV.III.v.1 'Pabhā-Suttam' ('Radiance Sutta')

<sup>36</sup> Meditators who have developed concentration will know that The Buddha is here not speaking metaphorically: the concentrated mind is indeed radiant and luminous.

<sup>37</sup> M.I.i.4 'Bhaya-Bherava-Suttam' ('Fear and Dread Sutta')



And for each of the three knowledges, The Buddha speaks of literal light (*āloko*):<sup>38</sup>

**In regard to things unheard before, vision arose** (*cakkhum udapādi*), **knowledge arose** (*ñāṇam udapādi*), **wisdom arose** (*paññā udapādi*), **true knowledge arose** (*vijjā udapādi*), **and light arose** (*āloko udapādi*).

Thus, although from one point of view, Nibbāna is described as peace, happiness, etc., from another point of view, it has the feature of being ‘featureless’.

It was once explained by The Venerable Sāriputta. He said:<sup>39</sup>

Happiness is this, friend, Nibbāna (*sukham idam, āvuso, Nibbānam*); happiness is this, friend, Nibbāna.

And when someone asked him how Nibbāna could be happiness (*sukha*), since it is not sensed (*natthi vedayitam*), he explained:

**It is, friend, precisely the happiness that is not sensed.**

And it is precisely because there is no sign of sight, sound, odour, flavour, touch or sensation, perception, or mental formation for the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind to grasp that Nibbāna is also called the Signless (*Animitta*).<sup>40</sup>

In other words, Nibbāna has nothing to do with mind, matter, space, presence or absence. Hence, it has nothing to do with an All, such as a universal consciousness (mind),<sup>41</sup> some kind of inner nature inherent in all things (omnipresence), some kind of primordial<sup>42</sup> essence<sup>43</sup> (*pakati*) (merely another word for self (*attā*)),<sup>44</sup> basis of existence, source or origin of life and the world.<sup>45</sup> That is namely another wrong view we may easily fall into: the view that Nibbāna is the

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.* and also S.V.XII.ii.1 ‘*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta’)

<sup>39</sup> A.IX.iv.3 ‘*Nibbāna-Sukha-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Nibbāna Happiness Sutta’)

<sup>40</sup> THE SIGNLESS: please see, for example, M.I.v.3 ‘*Mahā-Vedalla-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Great Questions&Answers Sutta’). Please see also the layman Citta’s profound explanation in S.IV.vii.7 ‘*Godatta-Suttaṃ*’ (Godatta is the name of The Buddha’s interlocutor). Vis.xvi PoP.23 explains also: *The truth of cessation has the characteristic of peace. Its function is not to die. It is manifest as the Signless.*

<sup>41</sup> This corresponds to the Pali ‘world soul’ (*purusa*), ‘one of the doctrines arising out of the eternalist wrong view’. (VisT.557)

<sup>42</sup> PRIMORDIAL: *adj.* existing from the beginning: original: rudimentary: first-formed. — *n.* first principle or element... PRIMORDIUM the primitive source, the first discernible rudiment (Latin *primordium* — = first; *ordīrī* = to begin) (CTCD)

<sup>43</sup> ESSENCE: An (immaterial) existence or entity; absolute being or reality underlying phenomena (POD) (This meaning matches the Pali.)

<sup>44</sup> VisT.359

<sup>45</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of this, the reader is referred to Vis.xvi PoP.67ff ‘*Nibbāna Kathā*’ (‘Nibbāna Discussion’). It is explained, for example (§91) *the cause [of suffering] is not gravid with its fruit like the primordial essence of those who assert the existence of a primordial essence. And the result [of the cause of suffering] is void of the cause owing to the absence of inherence of the origin of suffering, and of the path in cessation; the fruit of the cause does not have its cause inherent in it, like the two atoms, etc., of those who assert inherence. Hence, this is said: ‘Here three [Noble Truths] are of cessation [Third Noble Truth] void [the world is void of Nibbāna]; /Cessation void, too, of these three; [Nibbāna is void of the world]/ The cause of its effect is void, /Void also of its cause the effect must be.* This means the Four Noble Truths are separate, and none of them is inherent in another: Nibbāna is not inherent in suffering: the end of the world is not inherent in the world.

origin of life and the world, the beginning, a primordial essence, etc.

The Buddha explains the origin of the world:<sup>46</sup>

**And what, bhikkhus, is the origin of the world (*lokassa samudayo*)?**

[1] **Dependent on the eye and colour, eye consciousness arises....**

[2] **Dependent on the ear and sounds, ear consciousness arises....**

[3] **Dependent on the nose and odours, nose consciousness arises....**

[4] **Dependent on the tongue and flavours, tongue consciousness arises....**

[5] **Dependent on the body and touches, body consciousness arises....**

[6] **Dependent on the mind and other things (*dhammā*),<sup>47</sup> mind consciousness arises....**

**With the meeting of the three, there is contact.**

- **Contact is the condition for sensation;**
- **sensation is the condition for craving;**
- **craving is the condition for clinging;**
- **clinging is the condition for existence;**
- **existence is the condition for birth;**
- **birth is the condition for ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.**

Here, The Buddha explains that contact is the origin of the world. But the Buddha explains also that the condition for contact is the six bases, their condition is mind-matter, its condition is consciousness, its condition is formation, and the condition for all these conditions is ignorance. The origin of the world is not Nibbāna, it is ignorance. Ignorance is the mother of the world. That is the Second Noble Truth.<sup>48</sup>

Nibbāna is not the origin of the world, the origin of suffering; Nibbāna is the end of the world, the end of suffering. As the Buddha explained to Kevaṭṭa:<sup>49</sup>

**...all are brought to an end (*asesaṃ uparujjhati*).**

Nibbāna is not the origin of the world: it is the end of the world.

The Buddha explains:

**And what, bhikkhus, is the end of the world (*lokassa atthaṅgamo*)?**

[1] **Dependent on the eye and colour, eye consciousness arises....**

[2] **Dependent on the ear and sounds, ear consciousness arises....**

<sup>46</sup> S.II.I.v.4 '*Loka-Suttaṃ*' ('World Sutta')

<sup>47</sup> OTHER THINGS: when an object strikes one of the five senses, it strikes also the sixth sense, the mind. The Buddha explains: 'Now, Brahmin, these five faculties [eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body faculty], having separate spheres and separate fields, not experiencing each other's sphere and field, have the mind (*mano*) as their refuge (*paṭisaraṇaṃ*), and the mind experiences (*paccanubhoti*) their spheres and fields.' (S.V.IV.v.2 '*Uṇṇābha Brahmaṇa-Suttaṃ*' ('Uṇṇābha Brahmin Sutta')) But apart from those objects, the mind takes also its own exclusive objects (*dhammā*), which are in fact all 'other things': some of them are mind (*nāma*), such as attention, consciousness, sensation, perception, volition, thought, memory, etc.; some of them are neither mind nor matter, such as concepts (*paññatti*), and Nibbāna. The meaning of *dhammā* is thus the same as the meaning of the English THINGS: 'Any possible object of thought including persons, material objects, events, qualities, circumstances, utterances, and acts (*all things*, the universe)... [POD]' 'a fact: an even, happening, action: an entity: that which exists or can be thought of... [CTCD]' Nonetheless, in this particular sutta, Nibbāna and concepts are not included in OTHER THINGS, because they are not the world (are neither mind nor matter).

<sup>48</sup> Reference could here be made to The Buddha's above words to Rohitassa (p.139), that the four Noble Truths are made known in our own mind-matter. The author did not mention this, however, since it might be misconstrued to mean that we all possess the Nibbāna/Buddha nature.

<sup>49</sup> Please see above, p.141.

- [3] Dependent on the nose and odours, nose consciousness arises....  
 [4] Dependent on the tongue and flavours, tongue consciousness arises....  
 [5] Dependent on the body and touches, body consciousness arises....  
 [6] Dependent on the mind and other things (*dhammā*), mind consciousness arises....

With the meeting of the three, there is contact.

Contact is the condition for sensation; sensation is the condition for craving.

But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving comes cessation of clinging; with the cessation of clinging comes the cessation of existence; with the cessation of existence comes the cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair cease.

We may then cling to our wrong view, and say: ‘Yes, yes, I know ignorance and craving are the origin of suffering, but before that (primordially) there was Nibbāna: *samsāra* started only afterwards.’

Very nice. But there are perhaps two small problems.

- 1) The Buddha explains *samsāra*:<sup>50</sup> **Inconceivable, bhikkhus, is the beginning of this *samsāra*. A first point is not known of beings rushing on and running about, hindered by ignorance, and fettered by craving.**<sup>51</sup>

And The Buddha explains ignorance:<sup>52</sup> **A first point, bhikkhus, of ignorance is not known [such as]: ‘Before this, ignorance was not, but afterwards it arose.’ And while that is said, bhikkhus, nevertheless this is known: ‘Ignorance has its causal condition. Ignorance has its nutriment.’**

As just mentioned, ignorance is the mother of the world, but even so it does not constitute a first cause, a primordial essence: ignorance too has its conditions (the mother of the world also had a mother, and a grandmother, and a great-grandmother, etc.). Thus, to speak of a primordial essence constitutes nothing less than to speak of independent origination, a first cause: a first mother, before whom there were no other.

- 2) If, in spite of The Buddha’s words, we insist that the primordial essence of life is Nibbāna, the regrettable and inevitable consequence is that the Buddha’s Teaching then becomes a nonsense. Why? Because, if before ignorance there was Nibbāna, it means Nibbāna is a condition for ignorance. It means primordially there was Nibbāna, and then there was ignorance, and then The Buddha arose to teach us how to go ‘back’ to our ‘primordial/original mind’, ‘primordial/original state’, to be rejoined with the ‘universal consciousness’, etc. from which we somehow, mysteriously broke free.<sup>53</sup>

In that case, when in the fantastical future, we have all been mystically rejoined with the primordial consciousness, we have in fact attained nothing other than the condition for renewed ignorance. That means we shall inevitably once again mysteriously break free from Nibbāna because of ignorance, and the whole thing starts all over again. This means The Buddha’s Teaching is merely

<sup>50</sup> For example, S.II.IV.i.1 ‘*Tiṇa-Kaṭṭha-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Grass and Wood Sutta’)

<sup>51</sup> For the beginningless *samsāra*, please see also The Buddha’s explanations below, p.166ff.

<sup>52</sup> A.X.II.ii.1 ‘*A-Vijjā-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Ignorance Sutta’)

<sup>53</sup> This fallacy is discussed in VisT.543: ‘Those who hold that there is a Basic Principle as reason say: “The world is manifested from out of a Basic Principle (*padhāna*), and it is reabsorbed in that again.”’

a very bad joke, for it does not lead to the end of suffering, but is merely a laborious rigmarole.<sup>54</sup> It would be much easier, then, to throw in the towel.<sup>55</sup> And that is precisely what we cannot help doing when we believe in a primordial essence: we cannot help thinking it unnecessary to train in the True Men's Dhamma (*Sa-Pppurisa-Ddhamma*), unnecessary to observe the precepts, to meditate, and develop wisdom.

Furthermore, since (as just mentioned, and as The Buddha explains again and again) Nibbāna is the end of ignorance, it would mean that Nibbāna is both the beginning of ignorance and the end of ignorance. It would mean the origin of suffering is the same as the end of suffering, which means it is neither the origin nor the end. A banana is a banana and not a banana. In short, for us to speak of a primordial essence, is for us to speak primordial nonsense. And, as you can see, the only thing that arises out of primordial nonsense is endless nonsense. And the only way to make endless nonsense good is, of course, to resort to fathomless<sup>56</sup> mysticism: 'Yes, it sounds illogical, but that is because the truly deep, deep Dhamma is so very, very deep that only the adept mystic can see it, or even think about it.'

Very well, it is up to us: our mental, verbal and physical formation of kamma is our own property. There is no useful gainsaying mystical claims, for mysticism depends on and delights in contradiction, obfuscation, hidden meanings, etc.<sup>57</sup> Such is not The Buddha's way.<sup>58</sup> That is why, if we as Buddhists wish to de-mystify mystical Buddhism, we can, as always, do nothing better than turn our attention to The Buddha's Word (*Buddha-Vacana*).

First of all, we can look at The Buddha's description of His Teaching, the Dhamma:<sup>59</sup>

[1] **Well Taught is the Blessed One's Dhamma** (*svākkhāto Bhagavata Dhammo*)

<sup>54</sup> RIGMAROLE: 'long set of actions or words without any real purpose • *The customs officials twice made us go through the (whole) rigmarole of opening up our bags for inspection.*' (CIDE)

<sup>55</sup> THROW IN THE TOWEL: 'If you throw in the towel, you stop trying to do something because you realize that you cannot succeed.... □ *It seemed as if the police had thrown in the towel and were abandoning the investigation* [CCED]. The idiom derives from boxing: when the boxer's manager can see his man cannot possibly win, he may have the match stopped by throwing into the ring the towel (that he uses to dry the boxer in between rounds), instead of subjecting his man to further unnecessary beatings.

<sup>56</sup> FATHOMLESS: 'Something that is fathomless cannot be measured or understood because it gives the impression of being very deep, mysterious, or complicated. □ *...the fathomless space of the universe... The silence was fathomless and overwhelming.* [CCED]' 'I'm afraid it's a fathomless (= impossible to understand) mystery. [OALD]'

<sup>57</sup> The Buddha explains: 'Wrong views involve mystery, not openness.' Please see quotation below, p.147.

<sup>58</sup> Here, the author explained the *Visuddhi-Magga Commentary's* advice on the matter (§751-2): 'If all the states of the three planes are taken as mind-matter without exception, then how should one deal with what has been conceived by those outside the [Buddha's] dispensation as verbal meanings, such as the primordial essence, etc. [*Path of Purification* (p.687) gives examples: the substance (*drabya*), the soul (*jīva*), the body (*kāya*)]? Since these are like the hallucination of lunatics, and are taught by the not fully enlightened, what other way of dealing with them is there than to ignore them? Or, alternatively, their existence or non-existence can be understood as established by their inclusion within mind-matter.'

<sup>59</sup> e.g. D.ii.3.ii '*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta').

- [2] **Visible here and now** (*sandiṭṭhiko*)<sup>60</sup>  
 [3] **Without delay** (*akālika*)  
 [4] **Inviting scrutiny** (*ehipassiko*)  
 [5] **Leading onwards** (*opanayiko*)  
 [6] **To be experienced by the wise.** (*paccattam veditabbo viññuhīti*)

According to the laws of nature, to understand the Dhamma is vouchsafed only an élite: the wise. And, as we have seen, the Dhamma is not The Buddha's invention. The Buddha explains:<sup>61</sup>

**And what, bhikkhus, is dependent origination** (*paṭicca-samuppādo*)?

**Birth is the condition, bhikkhus, for ageing&death** (*jāti-paccayā, bhikkhave, jarā-maraṇam*).

**Whether there is the appearance of Tathagātas, or the non-appearance of Tathāgatas, there exists this element** (*dhātu*), **the fixity of the Dhamma** (*Dhamma-tṭhitatā*), **the natural order of the Dhamma** (*Dhamma-niyāmatā*), **causation** (*idappaccayatā*).

**A Tathāgata awakens to this, and penetrates it. Having done so, He explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, analyses it, elucidates it.**

The Dhamma is the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth.

Unless we have the required wisdom, we cannot understand the Dhamma. When that is the case, The Buddha cannot save us: The Buddha cannot save beings in hell, the animal world, the ghost world, or thoroughbred fools in the human world, the deva worlds, and higher worlds. He explains:<sup>62</sup>

**When it [the Dhamma] is thus explained, taught, disclosed, analysed and elucidated by the Tathāgata, if there is someone who does not know and see, what can I do for such a foolish common person, blind and sightless, who does not know and does not see?**

To know and see the Dhamma as it has been discovered and disclosed by The Buddha is not a question of mysticism. Hence, on His deathbed, The Buddha explicitly makes it clear to the Venerable Ānanda, that there is no mystical, 'secret' Dhamma:<sup>63</sup>

**I have taught the Dhamma, Ānanda, with no esoteric** (*an-antarām*) **and no exoteric** (*a-bāhiram*).<sup>64</sup> **The Tathāgata has no 'teacher's fist'** (*ācariya muṭṭhi*) **with respect to teachings.**

'Teacher's fist' means that some teachings the teacher hides in his closed fist. Such teachings he may keep in his closed fist, or he may divulge them to only select disciples. On His deathbed, The Buddha unequivocally denied that He had such a teacher's fist. This truth is of course indisputable, because a Buddha is incapable of speaking an untruth, whoever his audience may be. He ex-

<sup>60</sup> VISIBLE HERE AND NOW: the results of practising the Dhamma can be seen immediately; WITHOUT DELAY: they are immediate; INVITING SCRUTINY: the Dhamma is *ehi passa!* (come and see!); leading onwards: practice of the Dhamma leads one on to Nibbāna; TO BE EXPERIENCE BY THE WISE: The Dhamma is not the province of fools. (Vis.vii.77-85)

<sup>61</sup> S.II.I.ii.10 '*Paccaya-Suttaṃ*' ('Condition Sutta')

<sup>62</sup> S.III.II.v.2 '*Puppha-Suttaṃ*' ('Flower Sutta')

<sup>63</sup> D.ii.3 '*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta')

<sup>64</sup> AN-ANTARAM (lit. without inner) 'ESOTERIC inner: secret: mysterious: taught to a select few. [CTCD] meant for the initiated; private, confidential (Gk *esō* within) [POD]'; A-BĀHIRAM (lit. without outer): 'EXOTERIC external: fit to be communicated to the public or multitude [CTCD] intelligible to outsiders... ordinary, popular (Gk *exō* outside) [POD]'

plains:<sup>65</sup>

**Between the night in which the Tathāgata gains Supreme Enlightenment, Cunda, and the night in which He attains the Nibbāna element without remainder, whatever He proclaims, says or explains is so and not otherwise. That is why He is called Tathāgata.**

Thus, we have it from The Buddha's mouth that there are no two or three or four teachings: only one, the Dhamma. In the case of the Third Noble Truth, for example, The Buddha explains:<sup>66</sup>

**...if any ascetic or Brahmin should speak thus: 'This is not the Third Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, taught by the ascetic Gotama. Having rejected this Third Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, I shall make known another Third Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering': this is impossible.**

The Pali Texts give the Dhamma as explained by The Buddha in many ways and on many levels, but they are all completely coherent as His one liberating Teaching. In the case of the Third Noble Truth, for example, the Buddha explains:<sup>67</sup>

**'This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.' Such has been made known by Me.**

**In the statement, 'This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering', there are innumerable nuances, innumerable elucidations, innumerable illustrations.**

This is one of the innumerable ways in which The Buddha differs from all other teachers: He has no 'secret' teachings, for select disciples only. He explains:<sup>68</sup>

**There are, bhikkhus, these three things that involve secrecy, not openness. What three?**

- [1] **The ways of womenfolk involve secrecy, not openness.**
- [2] **Brahmanic chants involve secrecy, not openness.**
- [3] **Wrong views involve secrecy, not openness.**

Then there are the things that do not involve secrecy, but are open:

**There are, bhikkhus, these three things that shine forth with openness, not secrecy.**

**What three?**

- [1] **The disc of the moon shines with openness, not secrecy.**
- [2] **The disc of the sun shines with openness, not secrecy.**
- [3] **The Dhamma-Vinaya of a Tathāgata shines with openness, not secrecy.**

Furthermore, to realize the highest fruit of His teaching, his disciples do not in any way depend on being vouchsafed the teacher's 'divine wisdom' or 'power'. Such things are mumbo-jumbo, outside the domain of Buddhas. The Buddha explains:<sup>69</sup>

**Both formerly, bhikkhus, and now, what I teach is suffering and the cessation of suffering.**

And again and again, He says to the bhikkhus:<sup>70</sup>

**Meditate, bhikkhus, do not be negligent, lest you regret it later.**

<sup>65</sup> D.iii.6 *'Pāsādika-Suttaṃ'* ('Pleasing Sutta')

<sup>66</sup> The Buddha explains this for each of the Four Noble Truths. (S.V.XII.ii.6 *'Dutiya Dhāraṇa-Suttaṃ'* ('Second Remembering Sutta'))

<sup>67</sup> S.V.XII.ii.9 *'Saṅkāsana-Suttaṃ'* ('Illustration Sutta')

<sup>68</sup> A.III.III.iii.9 *'Paṭicchanna-Suttaṃ'* ('Secret Sutta')

<sup>69</sup> M.I.iii.2 *'Alagadd-Ūpama-Suttaṃ'* ('Snake Simile Sutta')

<sup>70</sup> For example, all the suttas in S.IV.ix *'A-Saṅkhata Saṃyutta'* ('Unformed Section')

**This is Our instruction to you.**

The Buddha's instruction to us is that we must work hard to attain Nibbāna. And the work is ours to do, nobody can do it for us, and then transmit it, like transmitting the 'flu. The Buddha explains:<sup>71</sup>

**Purity and impurity depend on oneself: no one can purify another.**

And:<sup>72</sup>

**By you yourselves must the effort be made: the Tathāgatas only teach.**

The wrong views of Nibbāna, and the attainment of Nibbāna, that we have discussed today, arise naturally from our primordial wrong view of self, our primordial self-belief clinging (*atta-vād-upādānaṃ*), our primordial identity view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*).<sup>73</sup> Hence, we may say that if there be any primordial essence of the world (of *samsāra*), it is the primordial nonsense that is the identity view. And the reason why it is so difficult for us to escape *samsāra* is precisely because it is primordial: even pre-primordial, for there is no beginning to our nonsense.

Our pre-primordial identity view is also why we may think that, when we attain Nibbāna, we are extinguished. That will be the beginning of our next Dhamma talk on Nibbāna (the end of birth and suffering).

Then please allow me to close today's talk with one of The Buddha's descriptions of what it means to have attained Nibbāna, to have become an arahant.<sup>74</sup>

Once there was a Brahmin, Doṇa, who was out walking, when he saw The Buddha meditating under a tree. He was so taken by The Buddha's appearance, that he asked The Buddha what kind of being He would become in his next rebirth. The Buddha explained that since He had abandoned the taints, it was impossible for Him to be reborn:

**Just as, Brahmin, a lotus, blue, red, or white, though born in the water, [and] grown up in the water, when it reaches the surface, stands there unwetted by the water.**

**Just so, Brahmin, though born in the world, [and] grown up in the world, having overcome the world, I abide unwetted by the world.**

**Understand that I am Enlightened, Brahmin** (*Buddhoti maṃ, Brāhmaṇa, dhārehi*).

Next time you see a lotus rise out of the water, please try to remember The Buddha's simile. And please let it inspire you to try to become lotuses yourselves, to rise high and dry above the world: to rise high and dry above primordial nonsense, formation, consciousness, mind-matter, six bases, contact, sensation, craving, clinging, existence, birth, ageing&death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

Thank you.

<sup>71</sup> Dh.p.xii.9 'Atta Vagga' ('Self Chapter')

<sup>72</sup> Dh.p.xx.4 'Magga Vagga' ('The Path Chapter')

<sup>73</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of identity view, please see above, p.124.

<sup>74</sup> A.IV.I.iv.6 'Doṇa-Suttaṃ' (Doṇa is the name of The Buddha's interlocutor.)

Today's talk is the third of seven on the Third Noble Truth: the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccam*), which is the attainment of Nibbāna, arahantship. Today, we shall look at why we very often have benighted views about Nibbāna, and then we shall look at what constitutes the enlightened view of Nibbāna.

The benighted views of Nibbāna that we have so far discussed are:<sup>1</sup>

- the sensual Nibbāna: sensual development
- the democratic Nibbāna: all Nibbānas are equal.
- Nibbāna as a place to be reached by travel: it is out there in space somewhere.
- Nibbāna as a realm of existence: rebirth into a realm of eternal existence
- Nibbāna as the primordial essence of life, inherent in all things: we are already possessed of Nibbāna, 'the Nibbāna nature'.<sup>2</sup>

Why do these benighted views of Nibbāna arise? Because of clinging (*upādānam*) to self-belief (*atta-vāda*), which is clinging to the identity view (*sakkāya-ditthi*). The identity view arises because we conceive of the five aggregates as self: conceive of matter (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formation (*saṅkhārā*), and consciousness (*viññāna*) as self.<sup>3</sup>

There are two extremes to the identity view:

- 1) the annihilation view (*uccheda-ditthi*): when we conceive of Nibbāna as attained automatically at death, because we view death of the body as annihilation of self: this is materialism, which is also orthodox.
- 2) the eternity view (*sassata-ditthi*): when we conceive of Nibbāna as the attainment of an eternal state, a rejoining the eternal Universal Consciousness, Primordial Essence, etc., which is found under very many forms, including 'spiritual' orthodoxy. We may believe the process happens automatically, we may believe it requires some work, and we may believe it requires simply a particular view, divine selection, etc.

But there is also an even more bizarre extreme: the extreme of conceiving of both these extremes. The Buddha explains:<sup>4</sup>

**Here, bhikkhu, someone has the view:**

**'This is self, this the world: after death, I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change: I will endure as long as eternity.'**

This is the eternity view. Then we hear the Dhamma:

**He hears the Blessed One, or a disciple of the Blessed One teach the Dhamma for the elimination of all standpoints, decisions, obsessions, adherences, and latencies; for the stilling of all formations; for the relinquishing of all attachments; for the destruction of craving, for dispassion, for cessation, for Nibbāna.**

<sup>1</sup> Please see above 'Scratch, Scratch, Scratch', p.123ff.

<sup>2</sup> These four views are discussed above, in 'The End of the World', p.139ff.

<sup>3</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of identity view, please see above, p.124.

<sup>4</sup> M.I.iii.2 '*Alagadd-Ūpama-Suttam*' ('Simile of the Snake Sutta')



This is the True Dhamma (*Sa-Ddhamma*), and we are most fortunate, of course, to hear it. But, owing to ignorance, we may misconceive this True Dhamma:

**He thinks thus: 'So I shall be annihilated! So I shall perish! So I shall be no more!'**

**Then he sorrows, grieves and laments; he weeps beating his breast, and becomes distraught.**

First, we hold the eternity view, and then we gain faith in the Dhamma, and then we hear about Nibbāna, and then get upset, because we conceive Nibbāna as annihilation: our eternity view becomes the condition for our annihilation view, and then we may lose faith in the Dhamma, and get upset or even angry. It is what we might call confusion's masterpiece.<sup>5</sup>

Because we misconceive Nibbāna, we may then misrepresent The Buddha's Teachings. The Buddha explains:<sup>6</sup>

**I have been baselessly, vainly, falsely, and wrongly misrepresented by some ascetics and Brahmins thus:**

**'The ascetic Gotama is one who leads astray (*venayiko*); He teaches living Man's annihilation (*sato satta ucchedaṃ*), destruction (*vināsaṃ*), extermination (*vibhavaṃ*).'**

This misrepresentation of The Buddha can be found in the annals of history throughout the world, and it takes place even today.<sup>7</sup>

But what is Man (*satto*)? A bhikkhu called Rādhā once asked this question:<sup>8</sup>

**Venerable Sir, it is said, 'Man (*satto*), Man (*satto*).'**<sup>9</sup>

**To what extent could one, Venerable Sir, speak of Man?'**

The Buddha explained:

**One is stuck, Rādhā, stuck fast through desire, lust, delight, and craving for matter: that way could one speak of Man.**

**One is stuck, Rādhā, stuck fast through desire, lust, delight, and craving for feeling.... for perception.... for formation....for consciousness: that way could one speak of Man.**

The Buddha is here speaking of the five aggregates of clinging (*pañc-upādāna-k-khandhā*). As just mentioned, the identity view is to conceive of the five aggregates of clinging as self, to be stuck fast to them.

And The Buddha explained it further with the metaphor of the sandcastles:<sup>10</sup>

**Suppose, Rādhā, some little boys or little girls are playing with sandcastles.**

**So long as they are not devoid of lust (*rāga*), not devoid of desire (*chanda*), not devoid of liking (*pema*), not devoid of thirst (*pipāsā*), not devoid of passion (*pariāha*), not devoid of craving (*taṇhā*), for those sandcastles, [so long do] they value them, play with them, treasure them, and treat them possessively.**

<sup>5</sup> For an example of this, please see below the case of Vacchagotta the wanderer, p.186 ff.

<sup>6</sup> M.I.iii.2 '*Alagadd'Ūpama·Suttaṃ*' ('Snake Simile Sutta')

<sup>7</sup> When a General Sīha asked if it was true that The Buddha taught annihilation, The Buddha explained: 'The annihilation I declare of lust, of hatred and of delusion; the many kinds of evil and unwholesome states, the annihilation I declare.' (*Ucchedaṃ vadāmi rāgassa dosassa mohassa; anekavihi-tānaṃ pāpakānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ ucchedaṃ vadāmi.*) (A.VIII.ii.2 '*Sīha·Suttaṃ*')

<sup>8</sup> S.III.II.i.2 '*Satta·Suttaṃ*' ('Man Sutta')

<sup>9</sup> *SATTO* this may also be translated as 'being' or 'creature'.

<sup>10</sup> Here, before quoting this passage, the author asked his audience what children do when they play on the beach. The answer was: 'They build sandcastles.' And the author pointed out how children put in very much work to make very beautiful sandcastles, with decorations and many details, and they may even fight over their sandcastle, and begin to cry, etc.

Our five aggregates are as sandcastles. And no first such sandcastle is known. We have built innumerable sandcastles, and go on doing so. Try to get the little boy to do his homework: no, he cannot put his mind to it. But he can put his mind to building sandcastles, even for hours in the hot sun. Likewise, whereas we find it difficult to put our mind to the Dhamma, we find it easy to put our mind to talking rubbish, reading rubbish and watching rubbish on TV, even for hours. Stuck to our identity view, we are stuck to the five sandcastles, as little children playing on the beach.

Let us now, then, look briefly at an analysis The Buddha gives of identity view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), with a more detailed analysis of the sandcastles we are stuck to. The sutta is the '*Mūla-Pariyāya-Suttaṃ*': *mūla* means root, and *pariyāya* means exposition/explanation. We may call it the 'Root Exposition Sutta'. The Buddha delivered this sutta to bhikkhus who had formerly been Brahmins, learned in the ancient and mystical Vedic teachings. They had gained quick erudition in the Dhamma. Hence, they conceived of the Dhamma as easy, became conceited, and failed to exercise humility and deference towards The Buddha. The conceit and ignorance with which one misconceives that the Dhamma is easy is almost *de rigueur* in 'Modern Buddhism', and just as now so then was such misconceiving of the Dhamma most regrettable, for it hinders progress in the Dhamma. Hence, The Buddha's aim with this sutta was to scatter the bhikkhus' conceit, and demolish any remaining Brahmanic sandcastles they might still be stuck to.

The Buddha began:<sup>11</sup>

**Bhikkhus, I shall teach you a discourse on the root of all things (*sabba dhamma mūla-pariyāyam*). Listen and attend closely to what I shall say.**

The Buddha is here discussing the all of identity (*sakkāya-sabbam*), which means He is discussing the root of our identity view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*).<sup>12</sup> The root of our identity view is (as The Buddha explained to Rādhā) our being stuck to our sandcastles, identifying with the five aggregates of clinging.

The Buddha continued:

**Here, bhikkhus, ...an ignorant, ordinary person (*assutavā puthujjano*),**

- **who does not see Noble Ones, and is in the Noble Dhamma unskilled (*Ariya-Dhammassa a-kovido*), and in the Noble Dhamma untrained (*Ariya-Dhamme a-vinīto*),**
- **who does not see True Men (*sa-ppurisānaṃ a-dassāvī*), and is in the True Men's Dhamma unskilled (*Sa-ppurisa-Dhammassa a-kovido*), and in the True Men's Dhamma untrained (*sappurisadhamme a-vinīto*),**

**perceives earth as earth... water as water... fire as fire... air as air...**

The ignorant, ordinary person is the mandate-giving majority of the electorate. Earth, water, fire and air are the four great elements that are matter (*rūpa*): either our body or external matter, such as the body of another, our material possessions, even a sandcastle.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> M.I.i.1 '*Mūla-Pariyāya-Suttaṃ*' ('Root Exposition Sutta')

<sup>12</sup> Please see the commentary to the sutta.

<sup>13</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of the four great elements, please see M.III.iv.10 '*Dhātu-Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Element Analysis Sutta').

And The Buddha explains that because of craving, conceit, and views (all born of ignorance), we conceive of the four elements in five ways (for example, our body):<sup>14</sup>

- [1] **He conceives of [himself as] earth... water... fire... air...**  
We identify with our body: think our body is our self.
- [2] **He conceives of [himself] in earth... water... fire... air...**  
We think our self is contained in our body, for example, as a single consciousness that resides in our body.
- [3] **He conceives of [himself apart] from earth... water... fire... air...** We think our self is separate from our body, for example, we think it is a consciousness that floats around by itself.
- [4] **He conceives of earth... water... fire... air as 'mine'.**  
We think of our body possessively, as our possession.
- [5] **He delights (*abhinandati*) in earth... water... fire... air...** We delight in our body.

What is this body that we delight in? It is, for example, our hair. We dye our blond hair dark, our dark hair blond (and sometimes get red hair), and our grey hair we dye too ('Now my hair is not grey, ergo, I am not grey: I am young!'). A man delights in hair on the upper lip (a moustache), or delights in every day shaving that hair off, and jewellery helps him show off his material wealth (heavy gold-chain, gold rings, and a gold Rolex, even a fake one): his sandcastles make him feel important and powerful. And from earliest childhood, a human female is taught to delight in and exhibit her body: to decorate her sandcastle. She is taught, for example:

- to delight in her hair (extravagant hair-dressing)
- to delight in her eyelashes (mascara, to make them look longer, even fake eyelashes)
- to delight in her lips (red lipstick is the favourite: to suggest youth and lust)
- to delight in her ears (earrings)
- to delight in scent (to disguise the natural, rank<sup>15</sup> odours of the body)
- to delight in her nails (long nails like an animal, and again red nail varnish, to suggest lust)

And to suggest youth, she shaves her legs, and even plucks out offending hairs (which is painful), and with jewellery on neck, wrists and fingers (even ankles), she shows off her skin (often wrinkled), and her flesh (often fat or flabby). Here, the princess, the prostitute, and the hard-nosed feminist are equal, and with so-called women's liberation, the self-imprisoning cult of exhibitionistic worship of the body has reached and reaches ever new heights.

But there is no end to our delight in and identification with the body, be we male or female, young or old, healthy or sick, tall or short, fat or thin, strong or weak, be it our own body or another's: although it takes different shapes and sizes. However it be, we see it all as 'me', as permanent, as happiness, and as

<sup>14</sup> The first four ways of identifying matter with self The Buddha mentions also when explaining identity view. Please see above quotation, p.124.

<sup>15</sup> RANK: smelling or tasting bad; offensive: *rank tobacco, the rank stench of rotting meat.* (OALD)

beautiful.<sup>16</sup> And we do the same with our material possessions.

What is all this? The Buddha explains:<sup>17</sup>

**The body is a castle of bones, plastered with flesh and blood, wherein are deposited ageing and death, pride and hypocrisy.**

A castle of bones or a castle of sand, it comes to the same thing. If we with meditation penetrate to ultimate materiality, we realize the body is nothing other than the hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, and lightness of the earth element; wetness and flowing of the water element; heat and cold of the fire element; windiness and pushing of the air element, and, for example, colour and odour (derived materiality).<sup>18</sup>

Then the Buddha explains how we identify also with other beings:

**He perceives beings (*bhūte*) as beings....<sup>19</sup> He perceives devas as devas.... *Brahmā* as *Brahmā* [and other beings of higher realms, and other realms too]....**

We speak of glorious Man, superior to animals. That feeds our pride, and justifies our killing and harming beings that we perceive as inferior or ‘useless’.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, to justify our lust, we speak of Man as animal: ‘Why restrain one’s natural impulses?’ And we may aspire to be reborn as a particular kind of being, in a particular kind of realm.

Then the Buddha explains how we identify also with the five senses and their objects:

**He perceives the seen as the seen...the heard as the heard...the sensed as the sensed [i.e. smelled, tasted and felt]...**

This is modern orthodoxy, we discussed it in connection with the leper and the blind man with his dirty white cloth, remember?<sup>21</sup> We identify with what comes in through the five senses. Just look at how we normally reflect on the food before, during and after eating: ‘Aaah! Smells goood!’ ‘Mmmm! Take a look at that! Yum, yum!’ We eat not only with the mouth, not only for sustenance; we eat with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, for sensual pleasure, and our tastes become ever so refined: food becomes a major pre-occupation.

<sup>16</sup> These are what The Buddha calls the four perversions (*vipallāsā*): ‘Four, bhikkhus, are these perversions of perception (*saññā-vipallāsā*)... of thought (*citta-vipallāsā*)... of view (*diṭṭhi-vipallāsā*). What four? Impermanence (*anicce*) is permanence (*niccanti*)... Suffering (*dukkhe*) is happiness (*su-khanti*)... Non-self (*anattani*) is self (*attāti*)... The unbeautiful (*asubhe*) is beautiful (*subhanti*).’ (A.IV.I.v.9 ‘*Vipallāsa-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Perversions Sutta’)) They arise from unwise attention (*ayoniso-manasikāra*)

<sup>17</sup> Dhp.xi.5 ‘*Jarā Vagga*’ (‘Ageing Chapter’)

<sup>18</sup> Please see The Buddha’s explanation of the four elements in M.III.iv.10 ‘*Dhātu-Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Element Analysis Sutta’), and for meditation on the four elements, please see Vis.xi PoP.27ff ‘*Samādhi Niddesa*’ (‘Concentration Description’)

<sup>19</sup> BEINGS: the commentary explains that this refers to beings below the deva realms; the explanation that follows suggests that this is only human beings.

<sup>20</sup> Here, the author mentioned how he has from several members of the ‘gentle sex’, of divergent ages and nationalities, received the argument that killing insects is perfectly all right because they are ‘not useful’. The author’s question in reply was: ‘And in what way are you useful?’ The response was invariably giggles.

<sup>21</sup> These two similes are used by The Buddha in the ‘*Māgaṇḍiya-Suttaṃ*’, discussed above, p.125ff.

This pre-occupation together with industrial development means that daily countless fish and other sea-animals, and countless chickens, pigs, and cattle throughout the so-called civilized world suffer unspeakable torture, unspeakable brutality, unspeakable terror, unspeakable pain, and unspeakable death.

But the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the belly filled with food. The Buddha explains how we identify also with the sixth sense and its objects:

**He perceives the cognized as the cognized [i.e. mental goings-on: sensation, perception, thoughts, memories, imaginings, etc.]....**

This is the most serious source of identification, for this is where we add to our experiences through the five senses: I am a man, you are a woman, I come from Malaysia, you come from Italy, he is Asian, she is Western, they are foreigners, we are feminists, you are male-chauvinists, they are young, we are old, we are equal, etc. Do you remember how we as children clung to our age? 'I am ten-and-a-half-years old!' 'I am almost twelve!' As we get older, we do not get any wiser: we get even more 'sensitive' about our age ('sensitivity' is in almost all cases merely a polite word for 'pride').<sup>22</sup>

Then The Buddha explains how we see things as one and as many:

**He perceives oneness as oneness (*ekattaṃ*)<sup>23</sup> .... diversity as diversity (*nānattaṃ*)....**

This is the oneness of *jhāna* versus the diversity of the five senses. Oneness is order, diversity is disorder. When we perceive oneness, our actions of body, speech and mind are consistent; when we perceive diversity, our actions are inconsistent, and there is room for confusion and self-contradiction: the dogmas are 'open-minded' and 'pluralist'.<sup>24</sup> Identifying with diversity is at the bottom of modern society's mad, and complex proliferation of sensualities, of political issues, and political parties. It is consumerism through all six senses, and is considered one of the blessings of modern development. Oneness on the other hand, may give rise to fundamentalism, and narrow mindedness: the dogmas are all the -isms that we identify with, sometimes even at the cost of our reason: Buddhism, capitalism, communism, feminism, liberalism, Political Correctism, etc.

Then The Buddha explains: **He perceives the all as the all (*sabbam*)....**

This is the view of seeing self and everything else as one: the origin of many religions and philosophies. There is, for example, the monistic view,<sup>25</sup> such as

<sup>22</sup> Here, the author mentioned that a local teacher, the Venerable Dhammavuddho, explains how we as children want to grow older very, very quickly, and then, as we get older, we want to grow older very slowly, and eventually we do not want to grow any older: in fact, we want to grow younger.

<sup>23</sup> The commentary explains that unity (*ekatta*) is the experience of the person who attains *jhāna*, whereas diversity (*nānatta*) is the one without *jhāna*.

<sup>24</sup> PLURALISM: 'a philosophy that recognizes more than one principle of being (opp. to *monism*) or more than two (opp. to *monism* and *dualism*) [CTCD]'; pluralist '*Most Western European countries are pluralist* (have a lot of different types of people, with different types of beliefs and opinions, living in them). • *A pluralist society allows its members to express their beliefs freely.* [CIDE]'

<sup>25</sup> MONISM: 'a philosophical theory that all being may ultimately be referred to one category; thus *idealism, pantheism, materialism* are monisms.... [CTCD]' 'Forms of doctrine maintaining that

the also modern view that everything is ultimately matter, or the view of one ultimate principle, where differences dissolve. And there is the pluralistic view, such as that everything is a multitude of gods or essences, and the also modern view that everything is merely polarities, that all views and actions are essentially good and right. This arises from the sensual capriciousness<sup>26</sup> that is modern orthodoxy: ‘What I like is good! What I don’t like is bad!’ and we do that which is right in our eyes. And, of course, because our likes are all different, and always changing, we get confused, our ethics and morality get confused and then because of identity view, we end up demanding that everything be seen as identically good (that is, only in so far as it agrees with the likes and dislikes of the moment, the chauvinism<sup>27</sup> of the moment). That way we have no compunction<sup>28</sup> about, for example, speaking of freedom and democracy at the same time as we maintain and develop vast arsenals of weapons for mass destruction, and even make occasional use of those weapons to unleash terror on the inhabitants of another country. Likewise, we have no compunction about speaking of human rights and equality at the same time as we legalize abortion and euthanasia. The result is a paradox: sensualist ethics/ethical sensualism.<sup>29</sup>

The result of all these benighted conceivings is:

**He perceives Nibbāna as Nibbāna. Having perceived Nibbāna as Nibbāna,**

- [1] **he conceives [himself as] Nibbāna,**
- [2] **he conceives [himself] in Nibbāna,**
- [3] **he conceives [himself] apart from Nibbāna,**
- [4] **he conceives Nibbāna to be ‘mine’,**
- [5] **he delights in Nibbāna.**

This means that because we have a wrong idea about reality, and identify with it, we also have a wrong idea about Nibbāna, and identify also with that. All the conceivings that The Buddha discussed, we conceive also as Nibbāna. For example, we conceive Nibbāna as sensual pleasure to delight in, as rebirth in a realm apart from this realm, as a ‘beautiful’ meditative state that is ‘mine’. We even conceive of Nibbāna as the one ultimate reality ‘concealed’ in everything,<sup>30</sup> from the noodle-soup on our table to our ‘inner and inherently enlight-

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there is only one kind of being and that matter and mind are not two ultimate substances. [POD]’

<sup>26</sup> CAPRICE: unaccountable change of mind or conduct, tendency to these... CAPRICIOUS: liable to caprice, incalculable (POD)

<sup>27</sup> CHAUVINISM: belief that one’s own views (political or otherwise) are more important and morally superior to other beliefs

<sup>28</sup> COMPUNCTION: feeling of guilt or regret for one’s action: *She kept us waiting without the slightest compunction.* ° *If I could find the people responsible, I would have no compunction about telling the police.* (OALD)

<sup>29</sup> This modern view is mentioned in the ancient commentator manual *The Guide-Treatise (Netti-Ppakaraṇam* § 648): ‘With cognizance distorted through having no acquaintanceship with the pleasure of peace, they [those with wrong view of self-torment as the way or sensual indulgence as the way] made such pronouncements as ‘There is no pleasure [arrived at] through pleasure: pleasure is to be arrived at through pain’, and ‘He who cultivates sensual desires enriches the world; he who enriches the world lays by much merit’. So perceiving, and with such views, aspiring to pleasure through pain, perceiving merit in sensual desires, they abide devoted to the pursuit of self-torment, and devoted to the pursuit of indulging sensual pleasure.’

<sup>30</sup> There are four ultimate realities: matter, consciousness, mental factors, and Nibbāna. Please see

PLEASE CONTINUE NEXT PAGE.

ened nature’: we think we and everyone else are, indeed, everything else is inherently possessed of Nibbāna, Buddhahood. With this view we conceive that we exist already in Nibbāna, we conceive of *samsāra* as perfectly delightful, for we conceive of ignorance, suffering, ageing&death as merely illusions.

We may then say: ‘Ultimately, what does it matter what we think about Nibbāna? It can be known only by attaining it anyway.’ The answer is: ‘If we do not want to attain Nibbāna, do not want to attain the end of ignorance, rebirth and suffering, of course it makes no difference what we think: the more ignorant the better. In that case, there is no need either for The Buddha’s Dhamma. But, the Buddha taught the Dhamma for those of us who do want to attain Nibbāna, who do want to attain the end of ignorance, rebirth and suffering. In that case, He taught that we need to not delight in things, for that neither is Nibbāna, nor does it lead to Nibbāna, the end of ignorance, rebirth and suffering.’ And, of course, before we are able to stop delighting in things, or even wanting to stop delighting in things, we need to understand that it is the advised thing to do: that, and only that, would constitute the beginning of Right View. That way, we also avoid misrepresenting The Buddha. The Buddha explains:<sup>31</sup>

**One who seeks delight in matter, bhikkhus, seeks delight in suffering. One who seeks delight in suffering, I declare, is not freed from suffering.**

**One who seeks delight in sensation.... perception.... formations.... consciousness seeks delight in suffering. One who seeks delight in suffering, I declare, is not freed from suffering.**

In other words, to delight in the world is to delight in suffering. And no less delight in the world and suffering is delight in ‘Nature’: pretty flowers, the nightingale singing in the old oak tree, a glorious sunrise over a glittering azure sea, etc. Just look at how emotional we get if someone cuts down the old oak tree for firewood. Getting upset is suffering, and it arises owing to delight, which is craving (*taṇhā*) and ignorance.

How to stop this delight? The Buddha explains:

**A bhikkhu who is an arahant, bhikkhus, with taints destroyed (*khīṇāsava*), who has lived the holy life (*vusitavā*), who has done what had to be done (*kata-karaṇīyo*), who has put down the burden (*ohita-bhāro*), who has reached the true goal (*anuppatta-sadatto*), who has destroyed the fetters of existence (*parikkhīṇa-bhava-samyojano*), and who is through final knowledge liberated (*sammad-aññā-vimutto*), knows earth directly as earth.**

This is the arahant. An arahant does not hold funny<sup>32</sup> ideas about things: he knows things directly:

**Having known earth directly as earth,**

**[1] he does not conceive of [himself as] earth,**

**[2] He does not conceive of [himself] in earth,**

**[3] He does not conceive of [himself apart] from earth,**

below, p.163.

<sup>31</sup> S.III.I.i.iii.8 ‘*Abhi-Nandana-Suttam*’ (‘Delight Sutta’)

<sup>32</sup> FUNNY (British English: please see No.2) [1] amusing, causing laughter • *Do you know any funny jokes?* • *I’ve never found Charlie Chaplin very funny.* • *It’s an extremely funny film.*

[2] strange, surprising, unexpected, or difficult to understand *The washing machine is making a funny noise.* • *He’s got some funny ideas about how to bring up children.* • *That’s funny – I’m sure I left my keys here....* • *It’s funny that we don’t hear from David any more.* • *It’s funny how Pat always disappears whenever there’s work to do....*(CIDE)

- [4] He does not conceive of earth as 'mine',  
 [5] He does not delight in earth.

How is the arahant to be distinguished from the unlearned ignorant, ordinary person (*assutavā puthujjano*)? The ignorant, ordinary person perceives things wrongly, and as a result conceives of himself as somehow identical with them, and delights in them; the arahant perceives things rightly by knowing them directly, and as a result, he is incapable of conceiving and delighting in things: he knows the earth element is nothing other than the earth element. Likewise, he knows:

- water directly as water... fire directly as fire... air directly as air...
- beings directly as beings... the seen directly as the seen... the heard directly as the heard... the sensed directly as the sensed... the cognized directly as the cognized...
- oneness directly as oneness... diversity directly as diversity... the All directly as the All....

The arahant knows what these things are, does not confuse them, and knows that they are all impermanent, suffering and non-self. How come? The Buddha explains:

- he knows Nibbāna directly as Nibbāna. Having known Nibbāna directly as Nibbāna,
- [1] he does not conceive [himself as] Nibbāna,  
 [2] he does not conceive [himself] in Nibbāna,  
 [3] he does not conceive [himself] apart from Nibbāna,  
 [4] he does not conceive Nibbāna to be 'mine',  
 [5] he does not delight in Nibbāna.

The non-arahant has all the wrong views about Nibbāna because he has not known Nibbāna directly: he has known a sandcastle, known it not directly, and has conceived of it as Nibbāna. As a result, he conceives of himself either as Nibbāna, or in Nibbāna, or apart from Nibbāna, or conceives Nibbāna as 'mine', or delights in Nibbāna. The arahant, on the other hand, does not conceive of anything this way: he knows sandcastle are sandcastles. The Buddha explains:

- Why is that? Because he [the arahant] has fully understood it, I declare....
- [1] Because, through the destruction of lust (*khayā-rāgassa*), he is free from lust (*vīta-rāgattā*)....  
 [2] Because, through the destruction of hatred (*khayā-dosassa*), he is free from hatred (*vīta-dosattā*)....  
 [3] Because, through the destruction of delusion (*khayā-mohassa*), he is free from delusion (*vīta-mohattā*).

When we become arahants, we stop building sandcastles and delighting in them, because we have destroyed lust, hatred and delusion. And how do we go about destroying lust, hatred and delusion? The Buddha explains:<sup>33</sup>

- Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu develops Right View ,
- which has the removal of lust as its final goal (*rāga-vinaya-pariyosānaṃ*), the removal of hatred as its final goal (*dosa-vinaya-pariyosānaṃ*), the removal of delusion as its final goal (*moha-vinaya-pariyosānaṃ*);
  - which has the Deathless as its foundation (*Amata-ogadham*), the Deathless as its destination (*Amata-parāyanam*), the Deathless as its final goal (*Amata-pariyosānaṃ*);
  - which bends towards Nibbāna (*Nibbāna-ninnaṃ*), slopes towards Nibbāna (*Nibbāna-poṇaṃ*), and

<sup>33</sup> S.V.I.II.viii.10 'Uddham-bhāgiya-Suttaṃ' ('Higher-[Fetters]-Related Sutta')



inclines towards Nibbāna (*Nibbāna-pabbhāraṃ*).

And The Buddha says the same for each of the remaining seven factors of the Noble Eightfold Path: Right Intention; Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood; Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

A Buddha becomes a Perfectly Enlightened arahant by rediscovering this Noble Eightfold Path. But what is the difference between the arahantship of a Perfectly Enlightened Buddha and the arahantship of a bhikkhu arahant?

The Buddha explains:

**Bhikkhus, the Tathāgata, accomplished and Perfectly Enlightened, knows earth directly as earth.... knows water directly as water... knows fire directly as fire... knows air directly as air... knows beings directly as beings... knows the seen directly as the seen... knows the heard directly as the heard... knows the sensed directly as the sensed... knows the cognized directly as the cognized... knows oneness directly as oneness... knows diversity directly as diversity... knows the All directly as the All.... He knows Nibbāna directly as Nibbāna.**

Having known Nibbāna directly as Nibbāna,

- [1] He does not conceive [Himself as] Nibbāna,
- [2] He does not conceive [Himself] in Nibbāna,
- [3] He does not conceive [Himself] apart from Nibbāna,
- [4] He does not conceive Nibbāna to be 'mine',
- [5] He does not delight in Nibbāna.

And:

**Why is that? Because the Tathāgata has understood it fully, to the end, I declare.**

Insofar as a Buddha has abandoned all defilements, He is an arahant, and no different from any other arahant. But insofar as He attains Buddhahood, He understands all formations without limit: He knows all sandcastles of all shapes and sizes. But his disciples, even though they attain Nibbāna, understand only a limited number of formations.<sup>34</sup>

And further, The Buddha explains why He does not conceive of things nor delight in them:

**Why is that? Because He has understood:**

**'Delight is the root of suffering' (*nandī dukkhassa mūla*), and, 'With existence (*bhavā*), birth, and the coming into existence of ageing&death (*jāti bhutassa jarā-maraṇa*)!'**

**Therefore, bhikkhus:**

**'Through the complete destruction (*khayā*), fading away (*virāgā*), cessation (*nirodhā*), giving up (*cāgā*), and relinquishing (*paṇinissaggā*), of all cravings (*sabbaso taṇhānaṃ*), the Tathāgata to Unsurpassed Perfect Enlightenment (*Anuttaraṃ Sammā-Sambodhiṃ*) has awakened (*abhi-sambuddho*)', I declare.**

As you may remember, The Buddha was giving this teaching on the root of all things to a group of bhikkhus, who owing to conceit failed to pay Him due respect. Hence, as the Text explains, at the end of this teaching, the proud and conceited bhikkhus were not pleased. Why? Because The Buddha had made it quite clear who was enlightened and who was benighted. Later, however, with humility awakened, and after more training, the bhikkhus stopped playing with sandcastles and became arahants.

When we become arahants, we have no further use for sandcastles. The Buddha explains:

<sup>34</sup> Please see the commentary to this sūta.

**But when those little boys or girls lose their lust, desire, affection, thirst, passion, and craving for those sandcastles, then with their hands and feet, they scatter them, demolish them, smash them, and put them out of play.**

Do you remember?<sup>35</sup> When it is time to have lunch, children delight in completely smashing their beautiful sandcastles. Why? ‘Grub’s up!’ that is why.<sup>36</sup> But the goal of the holy life is not grub; it is Nibbāna.

The Buddha explained it to Rādha:

**So too, Rādha, scatter matter, demolish it, smash it, put it out of play; practise for the destruction of craving.**

**Scatter sensation.... Scatter perception.... Scatter formation.... Scatter consciousness, demolish it, smash it, put it out of play; practise for the destruction of craving.**

**Because the destruction of craving, Rādha, is Nibbāna.**

The mandate-giving majority of the electorate run around excitedly building sandcastles. For example, once, a group of people got together to give *dāna* to the Sangha, and resolved to listen to the Dhamma all night.<sup>37</sup> But it was not long before some left owing to sensual desire, some left owing to hatred, some left owing to pride, and some owing to sleepiness and laziness just nodded in their places, not learning anything. Look around you: are things any different now?<sup>38</sup> The ancient reasons are also the modern reasons.

When The Buddha heard about it, He explained:<sup>39</sup>

**Few among human beings are those who cross to the yonder shore.**

**Other people just run about on the hither shore.**

But if we practise the factors of The Buddha’s Eightfold Path, practise according to the Dhamma, we may be able to break free from the ignorant majority, and be one of the élite who crosses from this sandcastle-strewn beach to the sandcastle-free beach at the yonder shore.<sup>40</sup>

**But those who practise according to the well-taught Dhamma will cross the realm of Death, so difficult to cross.<sup>41</sup>**

Thank you.

<sup>35</sup> Here, before quoting this passage, the author asked his audience what children do with their sandcastles when Mummy says it is time for lunch. The answer was: ‘They destroy them.’

<sup>36</sup> GRUB: (British English informal) food: *Grub’s up!* ie The meal is ready! (OALD)

<sup>37</sup> DhA.vii.10&11 ‘*Paṇḍita Vagga*’ (‘Wise Man Chapter’)

<sup>38</sup> These Dhamma talks were delivered on Sundays, with a break halfway. Thirty to fifty and more people would come with food, offer it to the bhikkhus, and then themselves eat. After eating, almost everyone would leave. Only a minority would clean up. Of them only a handful would stay to listen to the Dhamma talk, and after the break, only a pinchful would be left.

<sup>39</sup> DhA.vii.10&11 ‘*Paṇḍita Vagga*’ (‘Wise Man Chapter’)

<sup>40</sup> For The Buddha’s explanation of the factors for the hither shore as opposed to the yonder shore, please see quotation below, p.168.

<sup>41</sup> Of the one who has crossed to the yonder shore the Buddha says: ‘Him do I call a holy man.’ Please see quotation below, p.168.



Today's talk is the fourth of seven talks on the Third Noble Truth: the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccam*), which is the attainment of Nibbāna, arahantship. Today, we shall look at Nibbāna versus *samsāra*.

If we study The Buddha's Teachings, we understand that ultimate reality (*param-attha*) is fourfold:<sup>2</sup> consciousness (*citta*), mental factors (*cetasika*), matter (*rūpa*), Nibbāna.<sup>3</sup>

To know and see the fourth ultimate reality, Nibbāna, we need to know and see the first three: mind (*nāma*) (consciousness + mental factors) and matter (*rūpa*).

Now, clearly ultimate reality cannot adequately be described by language, since language depends on conventional reality (*sammuti*), concepts (*paññatti*) and conventional manners of speech (*voḥāra*). Nonetheless, for all the shortcomings of language, The Buddha Himself discusses and describes ultimate reality in very many ways. Nibbāna and arahantship He also describes in very many ways, for example, by metaphor.<sup>4</sup> We have already seen Him speak of the attainment of Nibbāna (arahantship) as:<sup>5</sup>

- the Supreme Noble Wisdom (*Paramā Ariyā-Paññā*)
- the Highest Thing (*Agga-Dhamma*)
- the Supreme Noble Truth (*Paramam Ariya-Saccam*)
- the Destination (*parāyanam*)
- the Ultimate Happiness (*Paramam Sukham*)
- the Deathless (*Amata*)
- the End of the World (*Lokassa Antam*)
- [the state of being] Enlightened (*Buddho*)
- Tamed (*Danto*)
- at Peace (*Santo*)
- [the state of having] Crossed Over (*Tiṇṇo*)

In fact, the word 'Nibbāna' itself is a metaphor, for literally it means 'expired', as in a fire or lamp that has gone out.<sup>6</sup> The Buddha uses also other meta-

<sup>1</sup> A FOOL'S ERRAND: (idiom, British English) 'a silly or fruitless enterprise: search for what cannot be found [CTCD]' 'a senseless or an unprofitable mission [OALD]'

<sup>2</sup> Ads.I.2 'Catudhā Paramattha' ('Fourfold Ultimate Reality')

<sup>3</sup> Consciousness, mental factors, and matter comprise the formed element, and Nibbāna comprises the unformed element. Please see The Buddha's explanation above, p.167ff.

<sup>4</sup> METAPHOR: 'use of a word or phrase to indicate something different from (thought related in some way to) the literal meaning, as in "I'll make him *eat* his words" or "She has a heart of *stone*" [OALD]'; some metaphors from the *Dhammapada* (xxv.10 '*Bhikkhu Vagga*' ('Bhikkhu Chapter'): 'EMPTY, bhikkhu, this BOAT! Emptied, it will SAIL swiftly. Having CUT OFF lust and hatred, you shall REACH Nibbāna.' (a metaphor is not the same as a simile: SIMILE (simil-ar) 'comparison of one thing with another, e.g. "as brave *as* a lion", "a face *like* a mask" [OALD]'); a simile from the *Dhammapada* (ibid.23): 'The bhikkhu who while young devotes himself to the Teaching of The Buddha ILLUMINATES [metaphor] this world LIKE THE MOON FREED FROM A CLOUD [simile].'

<sup>5</sup> Please see previous three talks.

<sup>6</sup> NIBBĀNA (*nir* - negative prefix + *vā* to blow, as in *vāyo* air/wind) (from PED). In English, this would in principle correspond to EXPIRE 'breathe out air, breathe out (air); (of fire, passion, &c)

phors. For example, just as He explains:<sup>7</sup> **Nibbāna to you, bhikkhus, I shall teach, and the path to Nibbāna,**<sup>8</sup> so does He explain:

**The Taintless (*An-Āsavaṃ*) to you, bhikkhus, I shall teach, and the path leading to the Taintless....**

- ☉ **the Yonder Shore (*Pāraṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Subtle (*Nipuṇaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Very Difficult to See (*Sududdasaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Unageing (*A-jajjaraṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Stable (*Dhavaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Undisintegrating (*A-Palokitāṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Unmanifest (*A-Nidassanaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Unproliferated (*Ni-Ppapañcaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Sublime (*Paṇītaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Auspicious (*Sivaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Secure (*Khemaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Wonderful (*Acchariyaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Amazing (*Abbhutaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Unailing (*A-Nītikaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Unafflicted (*A-Byāpajjhaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **Purity (*Suddhi*)...**
- ☉ **Freedom (*Mutti*)...**
- ☉ **the Unattached (*an-Ālayo*)...**
- ☉ **the Island (*Dīpaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Shelter (*Leṇaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Security (*Tāṇaṃ*)...**
- ☉ **the Refuge (*Saraṇaṃ*) to you, bhikkhus, I shall teach, and the path leading to the Refuge....<sup>9</sup>**

These many metaphors are all very inspiring, and if we read the accounts given by bhikkhus and bhikkhunis of their attainment of arahantship, we find descriptions even more inspiring.<sup>10</sup> What they all have in common is that they describe the cessation of suffering, which is the cessation of ignorance and formation.

The Buddha explains:<sup>11</sup>

**And what, what, bhikkhus,**

**is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodhaṃ Ariya-Saccaṃ*)?**

- ☉ **With ignorance's remainderless fading away and cessation (*avijjāya tveva asesa-virāga-nirodhā*),**

die out... ([ex +] Latin *spiro* breathe) [POD]’ Explaining the arahant, The Buddha says, for example: ‘They expire, as did this lamp.’ [a lamp at the place where The Buddha taught the sutta had just expired] (Sn.ii.1 ‘*Ratana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Gem Sutta’))

<sup>7</sup> S.IV.IX.ii ‘*Dutiya Vaggo*’ (‘Second Chapter’)

<sup>8</sup> The path to Nibbāna The Buddha explains in many ways (which generally speaking all come to the same thing), for example, Samatha and Vipassanā, and the Thirty-Seven Requisites of Enlightenment.

<sup>9</sup> For a fuller list of such terms in the Pali Texts, the reader is referred to the *Netti-Ppakaraṇaṃ* (*The Guide*) ‘*Vevacanaḥāra Vibhaṅgo*’ (‘Mode of Synonyms Analysis’)

<sup>10</sup> Please see *Thera-Gāthā* (*Elder Bhikkhus’ Verses*), and *Therī-Gāthā* (*Elder Bhikkhunis’ Verses*), some of the very oldest Pali Texts, found in the fifth *Nikāya*, the *Khuddaka Nikāya*.

<sup>11</sup> A.III.II.ii.1 ‘*Tith-Āyatana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Sectarian Doctrines Sutta’)

- formation ceases (*saṅkhāra-nirodho*);
- with formation's cessation, consciousness ceases (*saṅkhāra-nirodhā, viññāṇa-nirodho*);
- with consciousness's cessation, mind-matter ceases (*viññāṇa-nirodhā, nāma-rūpa-nirodho*);
- with mind-matter's cessation, the six bases cease (*nāma-rūpa-nirodhā, saḷ-āyatana-nirodho*);
- with the six bases' cessation, contact ceases (*saḷ-āyatana-nirodhā, phassa-nirodho*);
- with contact's cessation, sensation ceases (*phassa-nirodhā, vedanā-nirodho*);
- with sensation's cessation, craving ceases (*vedanā-nirodhā, taṇhā-nirodho*);
- with craving's cessation, clinging ceases (*taṇhā-nirodhā, upādāna-nirodho*);
- with clinging's cessation, coming-into-existence ceases (*upādāna-nirodhā, bhava-nirodho*);
- with the cessation of coming-into-existence, birth ceases (*bhava-nirodhā, jāti-nirodho*);
- with birth's cessation (*jāti-nirodhā*), ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation (*jarā-maraṇam, soka-parideva*), pain, grief and despair cease (*dukkha-domanass-upāyāsā nirujjhanti*).

Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering (*evametassa kevalassa dukkhak-khandhassa nirodho hoti*).

This is called, **bhikkhus** (*idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave*), the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccaṃ*).

The condition for the cessation of all these formations is the cessation of ignorance (*avijjā*): wisdom (*paññā*).

Then we may ask: 'But why do all these formations have to cease? What's wrong with sensation? What's wrong with mind-matter?' 'What's wrong with me?' 'What's wrong with my family?' Such questions arise owing to ignorance, not understanding the First Noble Truth: not being able to see that these formations, *saṃsāra*, are suffering (*dukkha*).

Let us then look at *saṃsāra*. The noun *saṃsāra* comes from the verb *saṃsārati*, which comes from *saṃ* (in the same way) + *sārati* (run on) = to run on in the same way.<sup>12</sup> To run on from life to life, to run about from here to there. The Buddha explains, for example:<sup>13</sup>

There will come a time, **bhikkhus**, when the great ocean dries up, evaporates, and is no more....

There will come a time, **bhikkhus**, when the great earth burns up, perishes, and is no more.

Yet, I declare, there will be no end to the suffering of beings, who (hindered by ignorance, and fettered by craving) rush on (*sandhāvataṃ*) and run about (*saṃsaratam*).

This we have done aeon after aeon after aeon (*kappa*).

Once a bhikkhu asked The Buddha how long an aeon is. The Buddha explained:<sup>14</sup>

Suppose, **bhikkhu**, there was a great stone mountain a *yojana* long, a *yojana* wide, and a *yojana* high, without holes or crevices: one solid mass of rock.

A *yojana* is about 7 miles (11 km).<sup>15</sup> Mount Everest is only about 5.5 miles high (8.9 km), and it peaks, so please try to imagine a cube of solid rock that is much bigger than Mount Everest, say, as long, wide, and high as from here to Pantai Aceh.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Resolution from PED

<sup>13</sup> S.III.II.v.7 'Gaddula-Baddha-Suttaṃ' ('Bound by a Fetter-Stick Sutta')

<sup>14</sup> S.II.IV.i.5 'Pabbata-Suttaṃ' ('Mountain Sutta')

<sup>15</sup> YOJANA: 'a measure of length: as much as can be travelled with *one* yoke of oxen, a distance of about 7 miles....' (PED) 1 mile ≈ 1.61 km ↔ 7 miles ≈ 11.3 km

<sup>16</sup> PANTAI ACHEH: a fishing village approx. 11km away from where the Dhamma talk was deliv-

At the end of every hundred years, a man would stroke it once with a piece of *Kāsi* cloth.

*Kāsi* cloth was the very, very fine cotton material that we find also in ~~Mod-~~  
India: one may mistake it for silk. What happens when you with such a fine cloth stroke your arm? You feel almost nothing. What happens then if you with such a fine cloth stroke solid rock? The effect would seem to be none at all. And if you do it once every hundred years? On a rock so big?

That great stone mountain might by this effort be worn away and done away with, but the aeon would still not have come to an end.

That long is an aeon, bhikkhu. That long, bhikkhu, are the aeons: we have run on not [only] one aeon, we have run on not [only] one hundred aeons, we have run on not [only] one thousand aeons, we have run on not [only] a hundred thousand aeons.

Why is that? Because inconceivable, bhikkhu, is the beginning of this *saṃsāra*.

And The Buddha explains:<sup>17</sup>

For a long time, bhikkhus, have you experienced the death of a mother... the death of a father... the death of a brother... the death of a sister... the death of a son... the death of a daughter... the loss of relatives... the loss of wealth... loss through illness.

As you have experienced this, weeping and wailing because of association with the disliked, and dissociation from the liked, the stream of tears that you have shed is more than the waters in the four great oceans.

Why is that? Because inconceivable, bhikkhus, is the beginning of this *saṃsāra*.

Whenever someone we love is very sick or dies, we grieve. Why? Because we think the situation is unique: we are unique. The mother who grieves over her sick or deceased child thinks she is unique, her child was unique, and her love is unique;<sup>18</sup> the widower thinks he is unique, his wife was unique, and his love is unique. We think we, our loved ones, and our love are unique: unique ‘me’, unique ‘mine’, unique ‘my self’. Owing to ignorance, we think our personal suffering is unique, and do not realize it takes place everywhere and all the time, and what is more, it has taken place everywhere and all the time since infinity. Our suffering is as unique as a grain of sand in the Sahara Desert. Each grain of sand has a different shape, yes, but they are all grains of sand.

The Buddha explains how we have been reborn now here, now there through the endless round of rebirth:<sup>19</sup>

Just as a stick thrown up into the air lands now on one end, now flat on its side, and now on the other end, so too as beings rush on and run about (hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving), they go now from this world to another world, they come now from another world to this world.

Why is that? Because inconceivable, bhikkhus, is the beginning of this *saṃsāra*.

A first point is not known of beings rushing on and running about (hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving).

For such a long time, bhikkhus, have you experienced suffering, anguish, and disaster, and swelled the cemeteries. It is enough to experience revulsion towards formations, enough to become dispas-

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ered.

<sup>17</sup> S.II.IV.i.3 ‘*Assu-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Tears Sutta’)

<sup>18</sup> The reader may here recall the story of Kīśagotamī, the young mother whose little son died. The Buddha asked her to get a mustard seed from a household where no one had ever died. Failing, she realized her situation was not unique, and her grief fell from her. (Dhp.A.viii.15 ‘*Sahassa Vagga*’ (‘Thousands Chapter’))

<sup>19</sup> S.II.IV.i.9 ‘*Danḍa-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Stick Sutta’)

sionate towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

Is this true, what The Buddha says?<sup>20</sup> If we sit in front of the box and watch fighter planes bombing a city somewhere in the world, if we watch refugee families on the run, if we watch famine-struck people scrabbling for food, and watch other scenes of disaster in the world somewhere, can we say: 'Pass the biscuits, please.' 'Mmmm! Where d'you buy these biscuits? Oooh, you baked them y'yourself! And (further chatter about the delicious biscuits).'? If we go into a hospital and see the rows and rows of beds with men, women and children sick and dying (maybe one of our relatives, or a friend), if we see the train of mourners that follow every big and little coffin to the crematorium (maybe one of our relatives, or a friend), if we see the aged, the blind, the deformed, the maimed, and the crippled struggling along to find some semblance of happiness (maybe it is one of our relatives, or a friend), can we say: 'What a beautiful sunset! Oooh, I wish I'd brought a camera!' or can we say: 'Oh! The beauty of life! The beauty of love! The beauty of nature!' or 'Oh! I'm so happy! My beautiful daughter produced the most darling pair of little twins in the whole world! Now, I'm a grannee! Isn't it wonderful!!!'

One would think we could not speak like that, but alas, we can think and speak like that, and we do think and speak like that: all the time. The gross manifestations of *samsāra* may affect us, but not for long: soon the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, and 'me!', 'mine!' and 'myself!' call, and we forget that our adorable children and grandchildren are nothing other than formations: formations of ageing, sickness, and death. Māra plays his tune, and we dance with delight back into darkest ignorance.

Once, some drunken women came to see The Buddha, and in front of Him they danced and giggled like schoolgirls. Then, with His psychic power, The Buddha made darkness descend, and cried:<sup>21</sup>

**What's the laughter, what's the fun,  
When you're ever being burned?  
Shrouded in darkness,  
Do you not seek the light** (*padīpaṃ na gavesatha*)?

The light is wisdom, the burning is lust, hatred and delusion,<sup>22</sup> the darkness is *samsāra*.

The Buddha analyses *samsāra*:

**This born** (*idha jāta*), **this grown** (*bhūta*), **this made** (*kata*), **this formed** (*saṅkhata*).

And we just saw Him call it also **formations**, and **the whole mass of suffering**. And the end of *samsāra*? Nibbāna? The Buddha explains:<sup>23</sup>

**There is an Unborn** (*A-jātaṃ*), **Ungrown** (*A-bhūtaṃ*), **Unmade** (*A-kataṃ*), **Unformed** (*A-saṅkhataṃ*).

That is all there is: no further realities exist. The Buddha explains it also as

<sup>20</sup> Please see also The Buddha's descriptions of the beginningless *samsāra*, p. 217.

<sup>21</sup> Dh.p.xi.1 'Jarā Vagga' ('Ageing Chapter')

<sup>22</sup> BURNING IS LUST, HATRED, AND DELUSION: see The Buddha's explanation, footnote 30, p.29.

<sup>23</sup> U.viii.3 'Tatiya-Nibbāna-Paṭisaṃyutta-Suttam' (Third Nibbāna-Related Section Sutta')



simply two elements:<sup>24</sup>

**There are, Ānanda, these two elements: the formed element (*saṅkhatā-dhātu*), the Unformed element (*A-saṅkhatā-dhātu*).**

*Saṃsāra* is the three formed (*saṅkhatā*) ultimate realities: consciousness (*citta*), mental factors (*cetasika*), matter (*rūpa*). External to them is Nibbāna, the fourth ultimate reality, which is unformed (*A-saṅkhatā*).<sup>25</sup>

And The Buddha explains that escape from suffering is possible only insofar as *saṃsāra* and Nibbāna are mutually exclusive<sup>26</sup> and unique:

**If there were not this Unborn, this Ungrown, this Unmade, this Unformed, not from this born, from this grown, from this made, from this formed, would escape be known.**

**But since there is an Unborn, Ungrown, Unmade, Unformed, so is escape possible from this born, this grown, this made, this formed.**

In other words, an escape from the state of formation cannot take place unless there is a mutually excluding state of non-formation. It is quite simple, in fact, is it not? People drown because they cannot get out of the watery water onto unwatery, dry land. Hence, The Buddha speaks of the hither shore (*tīra*),<sup>27</sup> which is *saṃsāra*, and the yonder shore (*pāra*), which is Nibbāna. Their mutual exclusiveness He explains over and over and over again, for example:<sup>28</sup>

**Who has passed beyond the bog, the slough, *saṃsāra*, all delusion: who has crossed to the yonder shore, in *jhāna*, without desire, without perplexity, [who] through non-clinging has attained Nibbāna, him do I call a holy man (*Brāhmaṇa*).**

The Buddha's holy man is the arahant. Others may call someone else a holy man, but not The Buddha, for such a man is still running up and down on the hither shore.<sup>29</sup> Whereas the arahant has crossed over to the yonder shore. And what is the difference? The Buddha explains:<sup>30</sup>

**The hither shore, bhikkhus, I shall teach you, and the yonder shore.**

**Listen and attend closely to what I shall say....**

**What, bhikkhus, is the hither shore (*orimaṃ tīraṃ*)? And what is the yonder shore (*pārimaṃ tīraṃ*)?**

- [1] **Wrong view, bhikkhus, is the hither shore, Right View is the yonder shore;**
- [2] **wrong intent is the hither shore, Right Intent is the yonder shore;**
- [3] **wrong speech is the hither shore, Right Speech is the yonder shore;**
- [4] **wrong action is the hither shore, Right Action is the yonder shore;**
- [5] **wrong livelihood is the hither shore, Right Livelihood is the yonder shore;**
- [6] **wrong effort is the hither shore, Right Effort is the yonder shore;**
- [7] **wrong mindfulness is the hither shore, Right Mindfulness is the yonder shore;**
- [8] **wrong concentration is the hither shore, Right Concentration is the yonder shore;**

<sup>24</sup> M.III.ii.5 '*Bahu-Dhātuka-Suttaṃ*' ('Many Elements Sutta')

<sup>25</sup> The three formed ultimate realities are also called *saṅkhāra-dhammā*, and the fourth ultimate reality is also called *vi-saṅkhāra-dhamma*.

<sup>26</sup> MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE: 'If two things are mutually exclusive, they are separate and very different from each other, so that it is impossible for them to exist or happen together. □ *They both have learnt that ambition and successful fatherhood can be mutually exclusive* [CCED].'

<sup>27</sup> THE HITHER SHORE/ YONDER SHORE: please see quotations above, p.161.

<sup>28</sup> Dh.p.xxvi.32 '*Brāhmaṇa Vagga*' ('Holy Man Chapter')

<sup>29</sup> HITHER (adj.): on this side or in this direction: nearer (CTCD)

<sup>30</sup> A.X.III.ii.6 '*Orima-Tīra-Suttaṃ*' ('Hither Shore Sutta')

- [9] wrong knowledge is the hither shore, Right Knowledge is the yonder shore;  
 [10] wrong liberation is the hither shore, Right Liberation is the yonder shore.

If we practise the wrong eightfold path, we remain on the hither shore; if we practise the Noble Eighth Path, we cross over to the yonder shore: the two paths are mutually exclusive.<sup>31</sup>

It is very simple: wet is not dry, and dry is not wet; darkness is not light, light is not darkness: they are opposites. Even a chicken understands it.

The Buddha explains Nibbāna further:<sup>32</sup>

**Truly, there is a base (*āyatana*) where there is neither earth (*neva pathavi*), nor water (*na āpo*), nor fire (*na tejo*), nor air (*na vāyo*).**

Nibbāna is of the sixth external base (*dhammā*), and is cognized by the sixth internal base, the mind.<sup>33</sup> But it is devoid of matter (earth, water, fire or air).

Then The Buddha explains how Nibbāna is where there is neither

- [1] the base of infinite space,  
 [2] nor the base of infinite consciousness,  
 [3] nor the base of nothingness,  
 [4] nor the base of neither-perception nor non-perception.

This is the four immaterial jhānas: mind (*nāma*). While the four fine-material jhānas are based on a material object (say, the in&out-breath), the immaterial jhānas are each based on an immaterial object: one more subtle than the next. Hence, these jhānas are most refined.<sup>34</sup> And it is not surprising that when we read the Buddha's analyses of why we get funny ideas about Nibbāna, we see that it is in many cases because we with wrong view develop the immaterial jhānas.<sup>35</sup>

It may also take place due simply to overestimation: we may think we have attained an immaterial jhāna when in fact we have not; we may have attained an immaterial jhāna, and think it is the attainment of cessation, or the attainment of Nibbāna. Why? Because with jhāna, the mind is incredibly peaceful, full of measureless light. Then, owing to lack of instruction, lack of proper instruction,

<sup>31</sup> For The Buddha's similar explanations of the two divergent paths, please see above, p. 138, and for a detailed discussion of the two paths, please see below Appendix II 'Knocking at the Right Door', p.233ff.

<sup>32</sup> U.viii.1 '*Paṭhama Nibbāna Paṭisamyutta-Suttaṃ*' ('First Nibbāna-Related Section Sutta')

<sup>33</sup> For the mind base and *dhammā*, please see above footnote 47, p.143. For the four elements, please see The Buddha's explanation in M.III.iv.10 '*Dhātu-Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Element Analysis Sutta').

<sup>34</sup> The four immaterial jhānas have the exact same number of mental formations as the fourth jhāna; the difference lies in their being based on an immaterial object. Hence, The Buddha describes both the fourth jhāna and the four immaterial jhānas as imperturbable (*āneñja*). (Please see M.II.ii.6 '*Laṭukik-Opama-Suttaṃ*' ('Quail Simile Sutta') & '*Āneñja-Sappāya-Suttaṃ*' ('Imperturbability-Fit Sutta')). Needless to say, the immaterial jhānas are mundane. For details, please see Vis.x '*Ā-Ruppa-Niddesa*' ('Immaterial Description')

<sup>35</sup> The Buddha explains such a wrong view as held by 'those ascetics and Brahmins, Assaji, who regard concentration as the essence and identify concentration with asceticism...' (S.III.I.II.iv.6 '*Assaji-Suttaṃ*') The commentary to this sutta explains that the essence of The Buddha's Teaching is insight (*Vipassanā*), path (*Magga*) and fruit (*Phala*). Please see also most notably The Buddha's analysis of all the wrong views in existence (D.i.1 '*Brahma-Jāla-Suttaṃ*' ('Supreme Net Sutta')).

we may very easily confuse the attainment of one jhāna as the attainment of a higher jhāna, of cessation,<sup>36</sup> or of Nibbāna: the confusion becomes more and more likely as the jhānas become more and more refined.<sup>37</sup>

When there is imperfect familiarity with the rudiments of the Dhamma, and we do not know how to discern ultimate mind (the individual consciousnesses and their mental factors) we may also confusedly conceive of the absurd, namely that one jhāna consciousness holds and conceals the consciousness of the next level of jhāna, and that Nibbāna is concealed within the consciousness of the highest immaterial jhāna: one kind of consciousness within the other, and the unformed element within the formed. With such confusion as condition, we have thus conceived of Nibbāna as held concealed within *samsāra*. We may conceive the whole world of formations (the formed element) as one big, all-encompassing consciousness, that like a multi-petalled lotus holds within it the multitude of consciousnesses. We may even conceive this all-encompassing consciousness as clasping in its heart the jewel in the crown, the one Unformed element, Nibbāna: a perfectly enchanting masterpiece of confusion.<sup>38</sup> With such absolute confusion as condition,<sup>39</sup> we perceive (inevitably) the attainment of

<sup>36</sup> CESSATION-ATTAINMENT: for an explanation and reference, please see above footnote 16, p.126. This attainment cannot be attained solely through Samatha practice. The Venerable arahant Kāmaṅgala explains: ‘For the attainment of the cessation of perception and sensation, two things are useful: Samatha and Vipassanā.’ (S.IV.vii.6 ‘*Dutiya Kāmaṅgala-Suttaṃ*’) Hence, also, The Buddha explains that while the jhānas (4 fine-material and 4 immaterial) may be attained by the untrue man (*a-sa-ppurisa*), the attainment of cessation may be attained only by the ‘True Man (*sa-ppurisa*).’ (M.III.ii.3 ‘*Sa-ppurisa-Suttaṃ*’ (‘True Man Sutta’)).

<sup>37</sup> When there is the attainment of Nibbāna, there is jhāna. It may be any of the eleven jhānas (please see next footnote), except that it is now a supramundane jhāna, because it has Nibbāna as object. The author is not referring to the attainment of jhāna with this one supramundane (Unformed) object, but to the attainment of jhāna with a mundane (formed) object, as in for example, the mundane fourth immaterial jhāna (the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception) the object of which is the (formed) consciousness of the preceding, mundane third immaterial jhāna (the base of nothingness). This subtle jhāna the insufficiently learned/skilled meditator may confuse with the attainment of a supramundane jhāna, or even the attainment of cessation, when the mind stops. For such confusion, please see M.III.I.5 ‘*Sunakkhatta-Suttaṃ*’ (Sunakkhatta is the name of The Buddha’s interlocutor). For The Buddha’s distinction between mundane and supramundane, please see below, p.234. For how to avoid such confusion, please see subsequent footnotes.

<sup>38</sup> The meditator will in this case be ignorant of the fact that Nibbāna cannot be attained solely through Samatha (the practice of jhāna), but requires Vipassanā practice. The Buddha explains: ‘And what, bhikkhus, are the things to be developed by direct knowledge? Samatha and Vipassanā.’ (*Katame ca, bhikkhave, dhammā abhiññā bhāvetabbā? Samatho ca Vipassanā ca.*) S.IV.II.vi.11 ‘*Āgantuka-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Guest-House Sutta’). Thus, the Noble Eightfold Path does not culminate in jhāna; it culminates in Noble Right Concentration (Samatha) associated with the remaining (Noble) seven factors, forerun by Noble Right View (Vipassanā). (Please see also The Buddha’s explanation below, p.236.) Discussing the fruits of asceticism, The Buddha explains also that attainment of the jhānas is fruits 3-4-5-6, which are then surpassed by fruit 7: knowledge and vision (*nāṇa-dassanā*), which is Vipassanā on mind-matter (please see sutta discussed below, p.196ff.)

<sup>39</sup> Such confusion would not have arisen had one familiarized oneself with the rudiments of the Abhidhamma (please see discussion of the four ultimate realities, above, p.163), had one discerned the individual jhāna consciousness and its mental factors, and had one through proper Vipassanā practice seen how all consciousnesses, including jhāna consciousnesses, arise, stand and pass-away: that constitutes their impermanent nature, their suffering nature, and their non-self nature. The Buddha explains how the bhikkhu attains the first fine-material jhāna (which is mundane), and then: ‘Whatever exists therein of matter, sensation, perception, formations and

Nibbāna as a rejoining the Primordial (all-encompassing) Consciousness, etc., which is absolute wrong view.<sup>40</sup>

Such confused misconceiving will then lead us even to think that Nibbāna is not unique, but inherent in *samsāra*, that they are one (mutually inclusive):<sup>41</sup> a sweet thought, of course, because then we can have our cake and eat it.<sup>42</sup> Then we can claim to be enlightened, and at the same time enjoy the sensual pleasures of the unenlightened: we can be arahants who break The Buddha's Vinaya: 'I have put down the raft! No attachment to silly little Vinaya! I have transcended all!'<sup>43</sup>

Alas, it is a fool's paradise, for the sweet thought is mind (*nāma*), which is conditioned: 'unconditioned mind' is an oxymoron.<sup>44</sup>

consciousness, he sees those things as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as void, as not self... Standing upon that, he attains the destruction of the taints [or attains to non-return]. The Buddha repeats this explanation for each of the remaining three fine-material jhānas (which are also mundane), and each of the first three immaterial jhānas (also mundane). (M.II.ii.4 *Mahā-Mālunkya-putta-Suttaṃ* ('Great Mālunkya-putta Sutta')) The fourth immaterial jhāna, however, cannot be so examined, for the formations therein are too subtle for a disciple to discern. Please see also The Buddha's practical explanation of how the meditator discerns the mental formations of each kind of jhāna consciousness 'one after the other'. (M.III.ii.1 *Anupada-Suttaṃ* ('One after the Other Sutta')). Please see also how the meditator may in the same way discern the formations of the four divine abidings (jhānas of lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity: also all mundane), and attain Nibbāna. Thus, these eleven attainments are called eleven doors to the Deathless (*ekādasa Amata-dvārāni*). (M.II.i.2 *Aṭṭhakanāgara-Suttaṃ* (Aṭṭhakanāgara is the name of a town/city (*nāgara*)).)

<sup>40</sup> For a discussion of the Primordial Essence/Consciousness, please see above p.142ff.

<sup>41</sup> For the fallacy of mutual inherence of Nibbāna and *samsāra*, please see also above footnote 45, p.142, and p.157.

<sup>42</sup> HAVE ONE'S CAKE AND EAT IT: enjoy the benefits from two alternative courses of action, etc when only one or the other is possible: *He wants a regular income but doesn't want to work. He can't have his cake and eat it!* (OALD) In other words, one cannot eat a cake and yet retain possession of it.

<sup>43</sup> Such conduct is in direct contradiction to The Buddha's explicit teaching on the matter: 'I see no ground on which any ascetic or Brahmin, or deva or Māra or Brahmā, or anyone else at all in the world could, in accordance with the Dhamma, accuse me thus: "Those things called obstructions by you are not able to obstruct one who engages in them."' (M.I.ii.2 *Mahā-Sīha-Nāda-Suttaṃ* ('Great Lion's-Roar Sutta')). The Buddha explains also the arahant: 'He cannot knowingly take life.... cannot steal.... cannot engage in venereal conduct.... cannot knowingly tell a lie.... cannot store up things for sensual pleasure as he did when he was a householder.... cannot do anything out of desire.... hatred.... delusion.... fear.' (D.iii.6 *Pāsādika-Suttaṃ* ('Delightful Sutta')) And The Buddha explains also how a Brahmin may spend forty-eight years leading the holy life, studying the Brahmanic texts, after which he engages in work and venereal commerce. When other Brahmins protest, he declares that such things do not defile: 'Just as fire burns clean things or unclean, but not by that is the fire defiled, even so, good sirs, if a Brahmin lead a life doing all these things [having a wife], not by that is a Brahmin defiled.' A Brahmin who declares such a thing is by The Buddha declared a Brahmin-outcaste (*brāhmaṇa-caṇḍālo*). (A.V.iv.2 *Doṇa-Brāhmaṇa-Suttaṃ* 'Doṇa is The Buddha's interlocutor.) This kind of distortion of the Dhamma, arising from a superficial and wrong understanding of the Dhamma, The Buddha analyses at length in M.I.iii.2 *Alagadd-Ūpama-Suttaṃ* ('Snake Simile Sutta'). There, He also explains: 'For sure, bhikkhus, that one should engage in sensual pleasures quite apart from sensuality (*aññat-eva kāmehi*), apart from sensual perception (*aññatra kāma-saññāya*), apart from sensual thought (*aññatra kāma-vitakkehi*), such a thing is not known.'

<sup>44</sup> OXYMORON: if you describe a phrase as an oxymoron, you mean that what it refers to combines

All such foolery arises owing to delight in *saṃsāra*, ignorance of the First Noble Truth.

An arahant, however, is no fool. He knows Nibbāna is unique in that it is devoid of both matter (*rūpa*) and mind (*nāma*), for both matter and mind are formations (*saṅkhārā*), which is *saṃsāra*. In short, an arahant knows Nibbāna is Nibbāna, *saṃsāra* is *saṃsāra*, and never the twain shall meet.

Next, The Buddha explains that Nibbāna is:

**where there is not this world** (*nāyaṃ loko*), **nor another world** (*na paraloko*), **nor moon and sun** (*na ubho candima-sūriyā*).<sup>45</sup>

Uniquely without mind-matter, Nibbāna is beyond this world, any other world, and any planet or star: to the North, South, East or West (the infinite universe cannot have cardinal points, anyway).

Then the Buddha explains:

**This I call neither coming** (*neva āgatim*), **nor going** (*na gatim*), **nor staying** (*na ṭhitim*), **nor death** (*na cutim*), **nor rebirth** (*na upapattim*).

Nibbāna is the end of rebirth (coming to a world), and death (going from a world), but even though Nibbāna is the end of running on, we must not think it is a final destination where we shall stay forever: there is no staying either. How can there be staying in a place without mind-matter? Hence, the measure ‘infinity’ does not apply to Nibbāna, for Nibbāna is without measure.

Then The Buddha explains that Nibbāna is:

**without foundation** (*a-ppatittham*), **without continuity** (*a-ppavattam*), **without object** (*an-ārammana*).

Nibbāna is not founded in something else; it is beyond time, which means the notion of continuity is inapplicable; and although it is an object that may be cognized by the mind, it is itself without object, for it possesses neither mind nor matter: it is its own unique ultimate reality, and shares nothing with any of the other three.

Finally, The Buddha explains:

**This is the end of suffering** (*esev-anto dukkhassa*).

Nibbāna is the end of suffering, which is the end of rebirth, the end of *saṃsāra*. And, explains The Buddha, not to aim for Nibbāna is a fool’s errand.

The Buddha explains the fool (*bāla*):<sup>46</sup>

**The hindrance of ignorance, bhikkhus, of the fool, associated with craving, is whereby this body has originated.**

**That way there is this body [with consciousness], and also external mind-matter: that way a pair.**

**Dependent just on the pair of six bases,<sup>47</sup> [there is] contact, touched by which (or by a certain one of**

two opposite qualities or ideas and therefore seems impossible. □ *This has made many Americans conclude that business ethics is an oxymoron.* (CCED)

<sup>45</sup> The Pali *na ubho candima-sūriyā* = not both moon [and] sun.

<sup>46</sup> S.II.I.ii.9 ‘*Bāla-Paṇḍita-Suttam*’ (‘Fool-Wise Man Sutta’)

<sup>47</sup> THE PAIR (*dvayaṃ*): The Buddha explains: ‘The eye and sights, the ear and sounds, the nose and odours, the tongue and flavours, the body and touches, the mind and other things. This is called the pair (*dvayaṃ*). If anyone, bhikkhus, should speak thus: “Having rejected this pair, I shall make known another pair”, that would be mere talk on his part.’ (S.IV.I.II.iv.9 ‘*Paṭhama-Dvaya-Suttam*’)

them) the fool experiences pleasure and pain.

The fool's ignorance and craving of his past life formed his rebirth consciousness and mind-matter of this life,<sup>48</sup> just as ignorance and craving formed the rebirth consciousness and mind-matter of other beings (external mind-matter).<sup>49</sup> Mind-matter is the condition for the pair,<sup>50</sup> which The Buddha explains as the twofold six bases, internal and external: eye—sights, ear—sounds, nose—odours, tongue—flavours, body—touches, mind—other things (*dhammā*). This pair of six bases is the condition for contact through eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, by which the fool experiences pleasant or unpleasant sensation.<sup>51</sup>

Next The Buddha explains the wise man in exactly the same terms. And then He asks: **What is the difference between the wise man and the fool?**

His answer is:

**For the fool, that ignorance has not been abandoned, and that craving has not been utterly destroyed. Why?**

**Because the fool has not lived the holy life for the complete destruction of suffering.**

**Therefore, with the breakup of the body, the fool fares on to [another] body.**

**Faring on to [another] body, he is not freed from birth, ageing and death....**

With continued ignorance and craving as condition, there is formation of a new body and rebirth consciousness, a new pair of six bases, a future life: fools run on in *saṃsāra*.<sup>52</sup>

But, explains The Buddha:

**For the wise man, that ignorance has been abandoned, and that craving has been utterly destroyed. Why?**

(‘First Pair Sutta’)) Thus, this pair is the same as the six bases (internal/external). He explains also that consciousness comes to be in dependence on this pair, with the meeting of the three, there is contact, which gives rise to sensation. (S.IV.I.II.iv.10 ‘*Dutiya-Dvaya-Suttam*’ (‘Second Pair Sutta’)) For The Buddha’s explanation of the sixfold contact as the origin of the world, please see above quotation, p.143.

<sup>48</sup> For The Buddha’s detailed explanation of the foundation of the rebirth consciousness, please see D.ii.2 ‘*Mahā-Nidāna-Suttam*’ (‘Great Causation Sutta’).

<sup>49</sup> Please see the Commentary to this sutta.

<sup>50</sup> In, for example, S.II.I.i.10 ‘*Gotama-Suttam*’ (‘Gotama Sutta’)S.II.I.i.10 ‘*Gotama-Suttam*’ (‘Gotama Sutta’), The Buddha explains: ‘With mind-matter (*nāma-rūpa*), there are the six bases; mind-matter is the condition for the six bases (*nāma-rūpa-paccayā saḷ-āyatanaṃ*).’ Please see also table below, p.179.

<sup>51</sup> The pair are the six internal and six external bases, two of the three constituents for contact through eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Hence, in S.II.I.i.10 ‘*Gotama-Suttam*’ (‘Gotama Sutta’), The Buddha explains: ‘With the six bases (*saḷ-āyatana*), there is contact; the six bases are the condition for contact (*saḷ-āyatana-paccayā phasso*).’ For The Buddha’s explanation of this as the origin of the world, please see above, p.143. Please see also table below, p.179.

<sup>52</sup> The Buddha explains this also from the point-of-view of the conditions for consciousness (ignorance and formation): ‘If of ignorance disposed (*avijjā-gato*), bhikkhus, a person performs a meritorious formation (*puññ-ābhi-saṅkhāraṃ*), consciousness (*viññāṇaṃ*) fares on to the meritorious; if he performs a demeritorious formation (*a-puññ-ābhi-saṅkhāraṃ*), consciousness fares on to the demeritorious; if he performs an imperturbable formation (*āneñj-ābhi-saṅkhāraṃ*), consciousness fares on to the imperturbable [formation of the immaterial jhānas, by which there is rebirth in the immaterial realm. Please see The Buddha’s explanation M.III.i.6 ‘*Ānenjasappāya-Suttam*’ (‘To the Imperturbable Sutta’)].’ Please see further below, footnote 59, p.175.

**Because the wise man has lived the holy life for the complete destruction of suffering. Therefore, with the breakup of the body, the wise man does not fare on to [another] body. Not faring on to [another] body, he is freed from birth, ageing and death.**

With the attainment of Nibbāna, one is an arahant (one is wise), which means there is no formation of a new body and rebirth consciousness, no new pair of six bases, no future life: wise men stop running on in *saṃsāra*.

This very straightforward matter we may understand also from the case of a Venerable Godhika.<sup>53</sup> After his complete Nibbāna (*parinibbāna*), The Buddha went to his kuṭi together with some bhikkhus. There, The Buddha saw a dark cloud moving about, and then explained:

**That, bhikkhus, is Māra the Evil One looking for the consciousness of the clansman Godhika, wondering: ‘Where has clansman Godhika’s consciousness (*viññāṇaṃ*) been founded?**

An arahant’s attainment of final Nibbāna means his consciousness does not re-arahant itself in another existence, in another set of mind-matter, another pair of six bases. Hence, The Buddha explained to the bhikkhus:

**With unfounded consciousness (*a-ppatitṭhitena viññāṇena*), bhikkhus, the clansman Godhika has attained complete Nibbāna (*parinibbuto*).**

But how about the arahant who lives on? For example, The Buddha lived for forty-five years. The Buddha explains that there are two kinds of Nibbāna:<sup>54</sup>

**These two, bhikkhus, are the Nibbāna element (*Nibbāna dhātu*). What two?**

- [1] **The Nibbāna element with basis (*sa-upādisesā ca Nibbāna dhātu*) and**
- [2] **the Nibbāna element without basis (*an-upādisesā ca Nibbāna dhātu*).**

Then The Buddha explains the first kind of Nibbāna:

**Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is an arahant...**

**In him, the five faculties<sup>55</sup> remain founded (*tiṭṭhanteva pañc-indriyāni*) through which... he experiences sensations pleasant and unpleasant, [and] undergoes pleasure and pain.**

This is the same as what The Buddha explained about the wise man: just as the fool experiences pleasant and unpleasant sensation, so does the wise man.<sup>56</sup> And, explains the Buddha:

**‘In him [the wise man], the end of lust, hatred and delusion, bhikkhus, is called ‘Nibbāna element with basis...’**

Our first attainment of Nibbāna is the end of ignorance. We could call it initial attainment of Nibbāna.

Then there is our subsequent, final and complete attainment of Nibbāna:

**Here, a bhikkhu is an arahant... In him, in this very life, all things that are experienced (*sabba-vedayitāni*)<sup>57</sup> have no delight for him: they have become cool (*sīti bhavissanti*).**

**This is called ‘Nibbāna element without basis.’**

<sup>53</sup> S.I.IV.iii.3 ‘*Godhika-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Godhika Sutta’)

<sup>54</sup> Iti.ii.8 ‘*Nibbāna-Dhātu-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Nibbāna Element Sutta’)

<sup>55</sup> These are the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body: five of the six bases.

<sup>56</sup> The Buddha analyses this process in, for example, S.II.I.vi.1 ‘*Pari-Vīmaṃsana-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Thorough Investigation Sutta’).

<sup>57</sup> The six external bases, including Nibbāna.

The Buddha explains that at this final attainment of Nibbāna:<sup>58</sup>

**mere bodily remains are seen.**

This is very straightforward.<sup>59</sup> The mind-matter that forms what we conventionally call a being does not at arahantship explode into nothing. Unless one dies at the same time as one attains arahantship,<sup>60</sup> there remain consciousness, mind-matter, which is the six internal and external bases, through which there is continued contact and sensation: before, explaining the fool and the wise man, The Buddha spoke of the pair. This pair, The Buddha calls also old kamma (*purāṇa-kamma*):<sup>61</sup>

**And what, bhikkhus, is old kamma?**

**The eye is old kamma, to be seen as performed (*abhi-saṅkhatam*), and willed (*abhi-sañ-cetayitam*),<sup>62</sup> and to be experienced (*vedaniyam*).**

**The ear... nose... tongue... body... mind.... This is called old kamma.**

For from the time He first attains Nibbāna (at His enlightenment), till He<sup>63</sup>

**attains the Nibbāna element without basis (*anupādisesāya nibbāna-dhātuya parinibbāyati*),**

which is His Parinibbāna, a Buddha also carries around old kamma. He still has eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body, through which there arises contact, through which he continues to experience sensations pleasant, unpleasant and neutral, just as a fool does. The Buddha's such basis continued to operate for forty-five years: that is why we have the large corpus of Texts called the *Ti-piṭaka*. But because a Buddha is an arahant, the sensations He experiences are no longer the condition for formation of a rebirth consciousness.<sup>64</sup> When a Buddha and other arahants act through body, speech and mind, there is no formation (*saṅkhāra*) of new kamma (*nava-kamma*). The Buddha explains:<sup>65</sup>

**With ignorance's cessation, formation ceases.**

As The Buddha has explained dependent origination, for there to be rebirth,

<sup>58</sup> S.II.I.vi.1 '*Pari-Vīmaṃsana-Suttaṃ*' ('Thorough Investigation Sutta')

<sup>59</sup> The Buddha explains: 'But when a bhikkhu has abandoned ignorance and aroused true knowledge... he does not perform a meritorious formation (*puññ-ābhi-saṅkhāraṃ*), or a demeritorious formation (*a-puññ-ābhi-saṅkhāraṃ*), or an imperturbable formation (*āneñj-ābhi-saṅkhāraṃ*)... He understands: "With the breakup of the body, following the exhaustion of life, all that is felt, not being delighted in, will become cool right here: mere bodily remains are seen."' (S.II.I.vi.1 '*Pari-Vīmaṃsana-Suttaṃ*' ('Thorough Investigation Sutta'))

<sup>60</sup> As did the abovementioned Venerable Godhika. The Buddha explains such a case: '... not first (*a-pubbaṃ*), not last (*a-carimaṃ*), is taints' ending or life's ending....' (A.VII.ii.6, 7, 8 '*Aniccā... Dukkhā... Anattā-Nupassī-Suttaṃ*' ('Impermanence... Suffering... Non-Self Reflection Sutta'))

<sup>61</sup> S.IV.I.III.v.1 '*Kamma-Suttaṃ*'

<sup>62</sup> WILLED: the verb form (past participle serving as adjective) of VOLITION (*cetanā*); could also be the straight adjective form VOLITIVE.

<sup>63</sup> Please see quotation, p. 147, also D.ii.3 '*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta')

<sup>64</sup> Please see table below, p.179. For details with regard to the feelings of the arahant after attaining the first kind of Nibbāna, which is then followed by his attainment of the second kind of Nibbāna, please see M.III.iv.10 '*Dhātu-Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Element Analysis Sutta').

<sup>65</sup> A.III.II.ii.1 '*Titth-Āyatana-Suttaṃ*' ('Sectarian Doctrines Sutta')



there needs to be ignorance. That is why a Buddha and any other arahant is incapable of being reborn: they are not fools, are they? And The Buddha is the wisest of wise. He and other arahants know and have seen *saṃsāra*, the origin of *saṃsāra*, the cessation of *saṃsāra*, and the path to the cessation of *saṃsāra*. Owing to ignorance, we do not know and see these four things. What is the result? *Dukkha*.

Once there was a Brahmin who described *saṃsara's dukkha* to The Buddha.<sup>66</sup> The Brahmin was wandering in a forest, looking for fourteen of his oxen that had gone lost. Then he saw The Buddha sitting crosslegged at the foot of a tree, with body erect, and mindfulness founded. He approached The Buddha, and said:

Surely this ascetic does not have  
Fourteen oxen [that have gone lost],  
Not seen now for the past six days:  
Hence this ascetic is happy.

Surely this ascetic does not have  
A field of blighted sesamum plants,  
Some with one leaf, some with two:  
Hence this ascetic is happy.

Surely this ascetic does not have  
Rats inside an empty barn,  
Dancing around merrily:  
Hence this ascetic is happy.

Surely this ascetic does not have  
A blanket that for seven months,  
Has been covered with swarms of vermin:  
**Hence this ascetic is happy.**

Surely this ascetic does not have  
Seven daughters left for widows,  
Some with one son, some with two:  
Hence this ascetic is happy.

Surely this ascetic does not have  
A tawny wife with pockmarked face,  
Who wakes him up with a kick:  
Hence this ascetic is happy.

Surely this ascetic does not have  
Creditors who call at dawn,  
Chiding him: 'Pay up! Pay up!':  
Hence this ascetic is happy.

When we hear this, we may think: 'Oh! Poor Brahmin! So unlucky!' And we may laugh in sympathy. It may not occur to us that the Brahmin's tale of woe is our tale of woe: it is everybody's tale of woe. The only difference between him and most of us is that he knew *saṃsāra* was *saṃsāra*, and realized how lucky

<sup>66</sup> S.I.VII.i.10 '*Bahu-Dhītara-Suttam*' ('Many Daughters Sutta')

that ascetic was who was sitting under the tree.

And what did The Buddha say to him? Did He say: 'There are four Noble Truths! The Noble Truth of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, and the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering.'? What do you think?

That is exactly what He said, for Buddhas never change their tune. The Buddha described the difference between *samsāra* and Nibbāna, the difference between the fool and the wise man:

Surely, Brahmin, I do not have  
Fourteen oxen [that have gone lost],  
Not seen now for the past six days:  
Hence, O Brahmin, I am happy.

Surely, Brahmin, I do not have  
A field of blighted sesamum plants,  
Some with one leaf, some with two:  
Hence, O Brahmin, I am happy.

Surely, Brahmin, I do not have  
Rats inside an empty barn,  
Dancing around merrily:  
Hence, O Brahmin, I am happy.

Surely, Brahmin, I do not have  
A blanket that for seven months,  
Has been covered with swarms of vermin:  
Hence, O Brahmin, I am happy.

Surely, Brahmin, I do not have  
Seven daughters left for widows,  
Some with one son, some with two:  
Hence, O Brahmin, I am happy.

Surely, Brahmin, I do not have  
A tawny wife with pockmarked face,  
Who wakes me up with a kick:  
Hence, O Brahmin, I am happy.

Surely, Brahmin, I do not have  
Creditors who call at dawn,  
Chiding me: 'Pay up! Pay up!':  
Hence, O Brahmin, I am happy.

The Buddha's happiness is the happiness of Nibbāna and arahantship. It is the purest happiness of all, for it is pure of the unhappiness that is inherent in all other kinds of happiness: it is unique, a wise man's errand.

Thank you.

STOPPED HAVE I, AṄGULIMĀLA! YOU TOO STOP!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> As for another visible fruit of asceticism, than this fruit of asceticism higher and more sublime, there is none.

<sup>3</sup> Because the fool has not lived the holy life for the complete destruction of suffering.... with the breakup of the body, the fool fares on to [another] body. Faring on to [another] body, he is not freed from birth, ageing and death....

Because the wise man has lived the holy life for the complete destruction of suffering.... with the breakup of the body, the wise man does not fare on to [another] body. Not faring on to [another] body, he is freed from birth, ageing and death.

(one life) NON-ARAHANT		(next life) NON-ARAHANT		(last life) FROM ARAHANTSHIP		results
▶▶ results ▶▶	(causes) ▶▶	▶▶ results ▶▶	(causes) ▶▶	▶▶ results ▶▶	(causes)	
consciousness	ignorance formation ▶▶	consciousness	ignorance formation ▶▶	consciousness	ignorance formation	consciousness
mind-matter		mind-matter		mind-matter		mind-matter
six bases		six bases		six bases		six bases
contact		contact		contact		contact
sensation ▶▶	craving	sensation ▶▶	craving	sensation ▶▶	craving	sensation
	clinging		clinging		clinging	
	coming-into- existence ▶▶		coming-into- existence ▶▶		coming-into- existence	
birth		birth		birth		birth
ageing&death ▶▶*		ageing&death ▶▶*		ageing&death ▶▶		ageing&death*

\*BIRTH + AGEING&DEATH (conventional teaching (*vohāra-desanā*))= CONSCIOUSNESS + MIND-MATTER + SIX BASES + CONTACT + SENSATION (ultimate teaching (*param-attha-desanā*)).

Results in the life of both a non-arahant and arahant : Kamma formation in a past life results in: the arising of a rebirth consciousness, and subsequent consciousnesses in that life, and the simultaneous arising of mind-matter, the six sense bases, contact, and sensation.

Causes in non-arahant's life : The non-arahant is possessed of ignorance. Hence, when there is sensation, there is craving and clinging, owing to which there is coming-into-existence of kamma, the formation of kamma. So there is at death the formation of a rebirth consciousness.

Causes in arahant's life : The arahant was in the past possessed of ignorance. Hence, there is still sensation, but because there is now no ignorance, there is no craving, and no clinging, which means there is no further coming-into-existence of kamma, no formation of kamma. So there is at death no formation of a rebirth consciousness.

<sup>1</sup> M.II.iv.6 'Aṅgulimāla-Suttam' (Aṅgulimāla was a serial killer who gained faith in The Buddha, ordained as a bhikhu, and became an arahant.) Please see below, p.223.

<sup>3</sup> The Buddha explains that because the fool does not destroy ignorance and craving, he continues forming a

<sup>2</sup> D.i.2 '*Sāmañña-Phala-Suttaṃ*' ('Asceticism Fruit Sutta') Here, The Buddha explains to King Ajātasattu fourteen progressively more superior fruits of the bhikkhu's life. The last one is the fruit of arahantship, here described. Please see The Buddha's explanation below, p.197.

rebirth consciousness. But destroying ignorance, the wise man discontinues formation of a rebirth consciousness. (S.II.I.ii.9 '*Bāla-Paṇḍita-Suttaṃ*' ('Fool-Wise Man Sutta'))



Today's talk is the fifth of seven on the Third Noble Truth: the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccam*), which is Nibbāna. We shall today discuss it by looking at the development of a wanderer Vacchagotta.

From the suttas, we understand that Vacchagotta asked The Buddha and other arahants many, many questions, often the same questions. We may gather that he was confused, but not so confused as to give up: he was a true seeker.

Once, he went to see the Venerable Mahāmogallāna and asked:<sup>1</sup>

[1] How is it, Master Moggallāna, is the world eternal?

What did the Venerable Mahāmogallāna say? Did he say: 'I think...', or, 'In my view...', or worse, 'I feel...'? No, the Venerable Mahāmogallāna was an arahant and chief disciple of The Buddha, hence his answer was accordingly:

**Vaccha, the Blessed One has not declared this: 'The world is eternal!'**

That is the answer of a true son of the Sakyan (*Sakya-Putto*). Then Vacchagotta asked:

[2] Then, Master Moggallāna, is the world not eternal?...

[3] is the world finite?...

[4] is the world infinite?...

[5] are the soul and the body the same?...

[6] is the soul one thing and the body another?...

[7] does one who has attained to the highest<sup>2</sup> [an arahant] exist after death?...

[8] does one who has attained to the highest not exist after death?...

[9] does one who has attained to the highest both exist and not exist after death?...

[10] does one who has attained to the highest neither exist nor not exist after death?

To all ten questions, the answer was the same:

Vaccha, the Blessed One has not declared this.<sup>3</sup>

The questions Vacchagotta asked are views (*diṭṭhi*), based on speculation, conjecture and theory: metaphysics.<sup>4</sup> When we do not know and see things proper-

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<sup>1</sup> S.IV.x.7 '*Moggallāna-Suttam*' ('Moggallāna Sutta')

<sup>2</sup> The Pali says *Tathāgata*, which is usually explained as THE HIGHEST TYPE OF PERSON, THE SUPREME PERSON, THE ONE WHO HAS ATTAINED THE SUPREME ATTAINMENT (*tathāgato uttama-puriso, parama-puriso, parama-pattipatto*). Please see, for example, (S.III.I.II.iv.4 '*Anurādha-Suttam*' (Anurādha is the bhikkhu who is The Buddha's interlocutor)). The Buddha uses this epithet to discuss Himself, although (as may be seen in the continuation of this talk) it refers also to an arahant, either male or female: one of the nine ways in which The Buddha describes Himself is namely that He is an arahant (*Iti'pi so, Bhagavā, Araham, Sammā Sambuddho...*). In order that his audience might all the time know exactly what was being discussed, the author chose to paraphrase *Tathāgata* as *one who has attained to the highest*.

<sup>3</sup> The Buddha's dismissal of these questions to the bhikkhu Mālunkyaputta gives rise to the famous simile of the man who is wounded by an arrow, and who refuses to have it removed until he has obtained all kinds of biographical, historical and other idle information about the archer, and the bow and the arrow, during which time he dies of his wound. (M.II.ii.3 '*Cūla-Mālunkya-Suttam*' ('Small Mālunkya Sutta'))

<sup>4</sup> METAPHYSICS: the Pali is *diṭṭhi-gata* view (*diṭṭhi*), gone (*gata*): arrived at by view, reached by view, resorting to views, speculation, conjecture, theory. METAPHYSICS 'speculations on the nature

ly, we speculate according to our benighted views and even our dreams. Then may we decide that an arahant still exists after his Parinibbāna, in which case, the infinite universe would never be without an infinite number of Buddhas and other arahants, and that sounds very sweet, does it not? We may, on the other hand, realize that to say an arahant exists after death makes a nonsense of the Four Noble Truths, so we wriggle out of it by saying that the arahant both exists and does not exist, or neither exists nor does not exist. That is the nice thing about metaphysics: we can contrive any solution we like, and if it sounds like nonsense, we can contrive a mystical theology, by which to convince the gullible that the nonsense is profound all-transcending truths.

Metaphysics was rife among wanderers in The Buddha's India, was rife before that, and is rife also today, everywhere: like ignorance, metaphysics comes naturally. It is the stuff religions are made of, including the chief religion of the modern world, modern so-called science. Modern science's claim to fame is that it is empirical and rational: that it rests not on theory but on hard facts derived from trial and experiment. This sounds very impressive, but fails to mention that the data one gathers, and the analyses one makes are done according to one's metaphysics, what one thinks one will find, and wants to find: unless one is an arahant, the 'disinterested' observer<sup>5</sup> is an oxymoron. And the metaphysics of modern science is that only matter is real (and includes mind), which means that quantity is equal to quality. Many pleasant experiences through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind is good, more is better. More and more is better and better. If they are unpleasant, engineer them so they are pleasant. Engineer more and more, produce more and more, sell more and more, buy more and more, consume more and more, and be more and more happy. That is the metaphysical foundation of modern science, which is why it is handmaiden to commerce.

This metaphysics has permeated every aspect of modern society, so that there is proliferation in every field, including metaphysics. More and more are the questions (issues), and more and more the answers (theses): the process is called 'research'. And as we can see, never-ending research does not lead to a more and more profound understanding of reality, but to a more and more confused understanding of what matters and does not matter. And owing to blind faith in modern science's confused scheme of things, we may then think the Dhamma is defective: 'The Buddha does not answer all the questions! Times

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of being, truth, and knowledge [POD]'. 'the science which investigates the first principles of nature and thought: ontology or the science of being: loosely and vaguely applied to anything abstruse, abstract, philosophical, subtle, transcendental, occult, supernatural, magical (Originally applied to those writing of Aristotle which in the accepted order came after (Greek *meta*) those dealing with natural science (*ta physika physis*, nature) [CTCD]'. '...part of philosophy which is concerned with understanding reality and developing theories about what exists and how we know that it exists [CCED].'

<sup>5</sup> DISINTERESTED OBSERVER: a much debated concept with regard to modern science. On the one hand, there are those who believe the scientist can perform his observations and experiments with complete impartiality (which makes him therefore 100% reliable); on the other hand, there are those who believe it is impossible. The discussion is at least three-four hundred years old. According to The Buddha's Teaching, there is always intention, which is governed by one's views: hence, complete impartiality is impossible, until one is an arahant.

have changed! In The Buddha's India, they did not know what we know today!

Vacchagotta also thought The Buddha's teaching was defective, also because it did not address his metaphysical scheme of things. Hence, he asked the Venerable Mahāmogallāna why other wanderers would give answers to his questions, but not The Buddha. The Venerable Mahāmogallāna explained:<sup>6</sup>

**Vaccha, wanderers of other sects regard the eye... ear... nose... tongue... body... mind... thus: 'This is mine (*etaṃ mama*), this I am (*esoham-asmi*), this is my self (*eso me attā*)'**

With the True Dhamma (*Sa-Ddhamma*), we come back to the same thing every time. What needs to be discovered was discovered in its entirety by The Buddha: there is no need for more research. MODERN science's trivial insights cannot contribute to our understanding of the Teachings of the Buddha: on the contrary. If we want to attain Nibbāna, we are well advised to stay clear of MODERN science.<sup>7</sup> The procedure of research (the way to the Cessation of Suffering) as rediscovered and explained by The Buddha need not, and cannot be improved. Hence, in The Buddha's day, many people knew what no disciple of MODERN science knows or can know today: in The Buddha's India, many people knew and saw Nibbāna, the end of suffering.

In accordance with The Buddha's procedure, they first developed Samatha, which is development of the technology (so to speak) required to gather the necessary empirical data: to see the formations of ultimate mind-matter rising, standing and passing away at the rate of billions per second. Then they developed Vipassanā, in order to research their empirical data. And the conclusion of their research was the only true conclusion that exists, the conclusion of all formations: Nibbāna. With this conclusion as condition, there was the conclusion of all questions, the conclusion of kamma-formations, and at their final attainment of Nibbāna, the conclusive conclusion of formations.<sup>8</sup> Their only metaphysics was, if you wish, faith in The Buddha's enlightenment: with their own

<sup>6</sup> Vacchagotta discussed these matters also another time with the Venerable Mahāmogallāna, to which the Venerable Mahāmogallāna explained the same process of identification with regard to the five aggregates of clinging (matter, sensation, perception, formation, consciousness) S.IV.I.x.8 '*Vacchagotta-Suttam*' ('Vacchagotta Sutta')

<sup>7</sup> Here, the author mentioned that a not uncommon MODERN practice is to refer to MODERN science in support of The Buddha's wisdom, for example, to refer to the words of MODERN scientists and intellectuals et. al. who praise The Buddha. The author pointed out that the MODERN scientist and intellectual will *per se* not have understood The Buddha's Teachings. To defer to his testimony is the same as to defer to a blind man's words regarding the beauty of a white cloth (for this The Buddha's simile, please see above p.130). To judge The Buddha with reference to MODERN science, -philosophy, or -political ideas, or to try to lend weight to His Buddhahood with superlatives, is to trivialize Buddhahood. The people of ancient India had better sense of propriety: '(How does Master Vacchāyana conceive the ascetic Gotama's ability of understanding? He is wise, is he not?) Sir, who am I to know the ascetic Gotama's ability of understanding? One would surely have to be His equal to know the ascetic Gotama's ability of understanding. (Master Vacchāyana praises the ascetic Gotama with high praise indeed.) Sir, who am I to praise the ascetic Gotama? The ascetic Gotama is praised by the praised as best among gods and men.' (M.I.iii.7 '*Cūḷa Hatthi-Pad-opama-Suttam*' ('Small Elephant-Footprint-Simile Sutta'))

<sup>8</sup> Please see table above, p.179, and for The Buddha's explanation of the two kinds of Nibbāna attainment, please see above, p.174.



enlightenment, this faith became knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

To Vacchagotta, the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna explained the outcome of such true ‘Buddhist’ research:

**But, Vaccha, the arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One, regards the eye... ear... nose... tongue... body... mind... thus: ‘This is not mine (*netam mama*), this I am not (*nesohamasmī*), this is not my self (*na meso attā*).’ Therefore, when the Tathāgata is asked such questions, He does not give such answers.**

Then Vacchagotta told the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna that he had just been to see The Buddha, and had asked Him the same questions, and been given the same answers:

**It is wonderful, Master Moggallāna! It is amazing, Master Moggallāna! How the meaning and the phrasing of both teacher and disciple coincide and agree with each other, and do not diverge, that is, in regard to the chief matter.**

It is perhaps not so very amazing, for the conclusion of true ‘Buddhist’ research is to understand the Truth, and the Truth is always the same. Hence, whether one is the arahant Mahāmoggallāna or the arahant Gotama Buddha one’s conclusions can in essence be only one and the same. The conclusions reached by modern science are, however, never one and the same. At one and the same time, there are many conclusions, even conflicting ones, and they change all the time according to ‘recent research’. Such is the nature of metaphysical ‘hard facts’ about the Truth: confusion.

In the same way, a metaphysical approach to the Dhamma leads to non-Dhamma (*A-dhamma*). We may have failed to follow the proper procedure, for example, failed to see ultimate mind-matter of past lives. Then may we insist that rebirth from life to life is only possible if there is a soul (we confuse conventional- and absolute truth). Then, because we know The Buddha says there is no soul, we may decide that when He speaks of rebirth from life to life, it is owing to His audience’s stupidity, for rebirth is only from moment to moment: in other words, we may decide that The Buddha told lies.<sup>10</sup> Then, with true metaphysicist conceit, we may argue and pontificate, and lead ourselves and others up the garden path. Likewise, when our research is inadequate, we may decide that

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<sup>9</sup> For example, once The Buddha asked the Venerable Sāriputta: ‘Sāriputta, do you have faith that the faculty of faith [-energy, -mindfulness, -concentration, and -wisdom], when developed and cultivated, has the Deathless as its ground, the Deathless as its destination and the Deathless as its goal?’ The Venerable Sāriputta answered: ‘Venerable Sir, I do not go by faith in the Blessed One about this... Those by whom this has not been known, seen, understood, realized and touched by wisdom: they would have to go by faith in others about this... But those by whom this has been known, seen, understood, realized and touched by wisdom: they would be without perplexity or doubt about this...’ And he explains that he is one of the latter. (S.V.IV.v.4 ‘*Pubba Koṭṭhaka-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Eastern Gatehouse Sutta’))

<sup>10</sup> There may be the belief that The Buddha would teach an inferior and incorrect Dhamma to certain people, because their faculties were less developed. Such a belief would clash, however, with The Buddha’s own words about His speech: ‘Between the night in which the Tathāgata gains Supreme Enlightenment, Cunda, and the night in which He attains the Nibbāna element without remainder, whatever He proclaims, says or explains is so and not otherwise. That is why He is called Tathāgata.’ (D.iii.6 ‘*Pāsādikā-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Pleasing Sutta’) quoted also above, p.147) This is why a Buddha never deigns to crack jokes nor engages in idle word play, etc., and it is also improper for a bhikkhu to do so.

The Buddha's teaching of non-self (*an-atta*), means that all things are ultimately empty (*suññā*): that they do in fact not exist at all.<sup>11</sup> Then, with true metaphysicist conceit, we may contrive a vast and elaborate network of metaphysical 'Dhamma' on emptiness (*suññatā*), which to the gullible appears infinitely profound. The Buddha explains that there are all in all sixty-two such contrived metaphysics about the world, and every one of them wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*).<sup>12</sup>

Such metaphysical confusion arises out of inadequate research, which leads to ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. The Buddha explained it on a number occasions to Vacchagotta:<sup>13</sup>

**It is, Vaccha, because of not knowing (*aññāṇā*)... not seeing (*adassanā*)... not penetrating (*anabhi-samayā*)... not understanding (*ananubodhā*)... not discerning (*appaṭivedhā*)... not discriminating (*asal-lakkhaṇā*)... not differentiating (*appaccupalakkhaṇā*)... not examining (*asamapekkhaṇā*)... not closely examining (*appaccupekkhaṇā*)... not directly cognizing (*appaccakkhakammā*),**

**[1] matter (*rūpe*)... sensation (*vedanāya*)... perception (*saññāya*)... formations (*saṅkhāresu*)... consciousness (*viññāṇe*), [The First Noble Truth]<sup>14</sup>**

**[2] its origin (*samudaye*), [The Second Noble Truth]**

**[3] its cessation (*nirodhe*), [The Third Noble Truth]**

**[4] and the way leading to its cessation (*nirodha-gāminiyā paṭipadāya*) [The Fourth Noble Truth] that these various metaphysics arise in the world.**

When, however, we know and see and penetrate and understand and discern and discriminate and differentiate and examine and closely examine and directly cognize matter, sensation, perception, formation and consciousness, we see that they indeed exist, but for only a very short time, which means they are impermanent.

The Buddha explains it when explaining what does and does not exist:<sup>15</sup>

**Matter that is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change: this the wise in the world agree upon as not existing, and I too say that it does not exist.**

**Sensation.... Perception.... Formations.... Consciousness that is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change: this the wise in the world agree upon as not existing, and I too say that it does not exist.**

**Matter that is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change: this the wise in the world agree upon as existing, and I too say that it exists.**

**Sensation.... Perception.... Formations.... Consciousness that is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change: this the wise in the world agree upon as existing, and I too say that it exists.**

The impermanence of the five aggregates means that they are suffering, and

<sup>11</sup> Here, the author mentioned that he was on several occasions presented with this reading by devotees who (needless to say) were confused: in one case very confused. The author referred to The Buddha's refutation of the two metaphysics 1) all exists, 2) nothing exists as extremes. His middle path is dependent origination. (S.II.I.v.7 '*Jāṇussoṇi-Suttaṃ*' (Jāṇussoṇi is the name of The Buddha's interlocutor.)) Please see also the subsequent sutta for His refutation of 3) all is one, and 4) all is many, and S.II.I.ii.5 '*Kaccānagotta-Suttaṃ*' (The Buddha is here speaking to the Venerable Kaccānagotta).

<sup>12</sup> Please see The Buddha's analysis of those views in D.i.1 '*Brahma-Jāla-Suttaṃ*' ('Supreme Net Sutta').

<sup>13</sup> S.III.xii '*Vacchagotta Samyutta*' ('Vacchagotta Chapter')

<sup>14</sup> Explaining the First Noble Truth, The Buddha summarizes: 'In short, the five aggregates of clinging are suffering.' (S.V.XII.ii.1 '*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*' ('Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta'))

<sup>15</sup> S.III.II.v.2 '*Puppha-Suttaṃ*' ('Flower Sutta')

their impermanence and suffering means they are empty of self: the world is not empty as such; it is empty of self: the very idea of self is purely metaphysical, an irrelevance.<sup>16</sup>

The Buddha made this very clear when once Vacchagotta had, it seems, put all the other metaphysical questions aside, and asked only the one:<sup>17</sup>

How is it now, Master Gotama, is there a self (*atth-attā*)?

The Buddha was silent. Then Vacchagotta asked:

**Then, Master Gotama, is there no self (*n-atth-attā*)?**

Again, The Buddha was silent. And then Vacchagotta got up and left.

Strange conduct from He who is unsurpassable teacher of devas and men is it, perhaps? Not so. For when the Venerable Ānanda asked The Buddha why He had not answered, The Buddha explained:

**If, Ānanda, when I was asked by the wanderer Vacchagotta, 'Is there a self?' I had answered, 'There is a self', this would have been siding with those ascetics and Brahmins who are eternalists (*sassata-vādā*).<sup>18</sup>**

**And if, when I was asked by him, 'Is there no self?' I had answered, 'There is no self', this would have been siding with those ascetics and Brahmins who are annihilationists (*uccheda-vādā*).**

Here, we may fall into Māra's trap and think: 'Ah! That means there both is and is not a self!' But that is not what The Buddha means at all. He is saying only that whatever way we look at self, it is misconceived: the premise<sup>19</sup> of self is not a premise. And The Buddha knows the confusion that may arise from allowing it to be a premise.

**If, Ānanda, when I was asked by the wanderer Vacchagotta, 'Is there a self?' I had answered, 'There is a self', would this have been consistent on my part with the arising of the knowledge that all things are non-self (*sabbe dhammā anattā*)?' (No, Venerable Sir.)**

**And if, when I was asked by him, 'Is there no self?' I had answered, 'There is no self', the wanderer Vacchagotta, already confused, would have fallen into even greater confusion, thinking, 'It seems that the self I formerly had does not exist now.'<sup>20</sup>**

Alas, poor Vacchagotta's metaphysics did bring great confusion upon him. But he persevered, and again and again would go and talk with The Buddha. Let us listen again. In this case, Vacchagotta asked The Buddha which of the ten metaphysical views He held: the world is eternal or not, the one who has at-

<sup>16</sup> The Buddha explains it to the Venerable Ānanda: 'It is, Ānanda, because it is empty of self and what belongs to self that it is said, 'Empty is the world, empty is the world.' And what is empty of self and of what belongs to self? The eye... colour... eye consciousness... eye contact... whatever sensation arises with eye contact as condition... [and the same for ear, nose, tongue, body and mind].' S.IV.II.iv.2 'Suññata-Loka-Suttam' ('Empty World Sutta').

<sup>17</sup> S.IV.I.x.10 'Ānanda-Suttam' ('Ānanda Sutta')

<sup>18</sup> ETERNALISTS/ANNIHILATIONISTS: such as hold the eternity/annihilation view. For these views, please see above, p.151.

<sup>19</sup> PREMISE: A premise is something that you suppose is true and that you use as a basis for developing an idea. □ *The premise is that schools will work harder to improve if they must compete... The programme started from the premise that men and women are on equal terms in this society.* (CCED)

<sup>20</sup> For the Buddha's more detailed explanation of this misunderstanding of non-self (in connection with His explanation of the attainment of Nibbāna), please see above, p.151.

tained to the highest exists after death or not, etc.<sup>21</sup> In each case, The Buddha said He did not hold that view. Then Vacchagotta asked:

(How is it then, Master Gotama?

(When Master Gotama is asked each of these ten questions, he replies: 'I do not hold that view.'

(What danger does Master Gotama see that He does not take up any of these metaphysics?)

For each one, The Buddha explained the same. For example:

**Vaccha the metaphysics that the one who has attained the highest exists after death is a thicket of views (*diṭṭhi gahanam*), a wilderness of views (*diṭṭhi kantāro*), a contortion of views (*diṭṭhi visūkam*), a vacillation of views (*diṭṭhivipphanditam*), a fetter of views (*diṭṭhi saṃyojanam*).**

**It is beset by suffering (*sa-dukkham*), by vexation (*sa-vighātam*), by despair (*sa-upāyāsam*), and by fever (*sa-pariḷāham*), and not to disenchantment (*na nibbidāya*), not to dispassion (*na virāgāya*), not to cessation (*na nirodhāya*), not to peace (*na upasamāya*), not to direct knowledge (*na abhiññāya*), not to enlightenment (*na sambodhāya*), not to Nibbāna does it lead (*na Nibbānāya saṃvatta*).**

And The Buddha concluded:

**Seeing this danger, I do not entertain any of these metaphysics.**

Then Vacchagotta asked:

(Then does Master Gotama entertain any metaphysics at all?)

The Buddha explained:

**Vaccha, metaphysics is something the one who has attained to the highest<sup>22</sup> has put away. For the one who has attained to the highest, Vaccha, has seen this:**

**'Such is matter (*iti rūpaṃ*)... such is sensation (*iti vedanā*)... such is perception (*iti saññā*)... such is formation (*iti saṅkhārā*)... such is consciousness (*iti viññāṇam*).**

Here, The Buddha explains that an arahant has gathered his empirical data, which means he knows and has seen the five aggregates of:<sup>23</sup>

[1-3] **past, future, or present (*atit-ānāgata paccuppanam*);**

[4-5] **internal or external (*ajjhataṃ vā bahiddhā vā*),**

[6-7] **gross or subtle (*olaṅkaraṃ vā sukhumam vā*),**

[8-9] **inferior or superior (*hīnam vā paṇītam vā*),**

[10-11] **far or near (*yaṃ dūre santike vā*).**

Then comes the arahant's analysis of the eleven kinds of five aggregates. The Buddha explains:

[1] **Such is matter's origin (*iti rūpassa samudayo*), such matter's disappearance (*iti rūpassa atthaṅgamo*);**

[2] **such is sensation's origin (*iti vedanāya samudayo*), such sensation's disappearance (*iti vedanāya atthaṅgamo*);**

[3] **such is perception's origin (*iti saññāya samudayo*), such perception's disappearance (*iti saññāya atthaṅgamo*);**

[4] **such is formations' origin (*iti saṅkhārānaṃ samudayo*), such formations' disappearance (*iti saṅkhārānaṃ atthaṅgamo*);**

<sup>21</sup> M.II.iii.2 'Aggi-Vaccha-Suttam' ('Fire Vacchagotta Sutta')

<sup>22</sup> After this The Buddha's explanation, Vacchagotta asks (below): 'When a bhikkhu's mind is liberated thus....' One may then presume that also here, The Buddha does not use *Tathāgata* to refer to only Himself, but to any arahant.

<sup>23</sup> Please see, for example, S.III.I.v.6 'Khandha-Suttam' ('Aggregate Sutta').

[5] such is consciousness's origin (*iti viññāṇassa samudayo*), such consciousness's cessation (*iti viññāṇassa atthaṅgamo*).

This means, he sees how the eleven kinds of ultimate mind-matter arise (come into existence), and then pass away. He knows and sees the First Noble Truth (suffering) and the Second Noble Truth (the origin of suffering). The Noble Truths are not metaphysical but actual:<sup>24</sup>

These four, bhikkhus, are actual (*tathāni*), not un-actual (*avi-tathāni*), not otherwise (*an-aññathāni*).

What four?

- [1] 'This is suffering' (*'idaṃ dukkha'nti*) is actual not un-actual not otherwise.
- [2] 'This is the origin of suffering' (*'ayaṃ dukkha-samudayo'ti*) is actual not un-actual not otherwise.
- [3] 'This is the cessation of suffering' (*'ayaṃ dukkha-nirodho'ti*) is actual not un-actual not otherwise.
- [4] 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering' (*'ayaṃ dukkha-nirodha-gāminī paṭipadā'ti*) is actual, not un-actual, not otherwise.

Owing to this knowledge of actuality, explained The Buddha, the arahant gives up metaphysics and attains the highest:

Therefore, I declare, with the destruction (*khayā*), fading away (*virāgā*), cessation (*nirodhā*), giving up (*cāgā*), relinquishing (*paṭinissaggā*), of all conceivings (*sabba maññitānaṃ*), all conjectures (*sabba mathitānaṃ*), all I-making (*sabba ahaṃ-kāra*), mine-making (*mamaṃ-kāra*), [and] the latency of conceit (*mān-ānusayānaṃ*), the one who has attained to the highest is liberated through not clinging (*anupādā vimuttoti*).

As the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna and The Buddha explained before, so long as all these things exist, there remains the latency of metaphysics,<sup>25</sup> for they are the condition for metaphysics: with arahantship, those conditions no longer exist.<sup>26</sup>

Alas, for Vacchagotta they still existed, which is why he persisted with metaphysics, and asked:

- [1] (When a bhikkhu's mind is liberated thus, Master Gotama, where is he reborn (*upapajjati*)?)  
The term 'reborn' does not apply, Vaccha (*na upeti*).
- [2] (Then is he not reborn, Master Gotama (*na upapajjati*)?)  
The term 'is not reborn' does not apply, Vaccha.
- [3] (Then is he both reborn and not reborn, Master Gotama (*upapajjati ca na ca upapajjati*)?)  
The term 'both reborn and not reborn' does not apply Vaccha.
- [4] (Then is he neither reborn nor not reborn, Master Gotama (*neva upapajjati na na upapajjati*)?)  
The term 'neither reborn nor not reborn' does not apply, Vaccha.

Here, again, The Buddha makes it quite clear that the very premise for Vacchagotta's questions is not a premise. And what happens when a metaphysicist's premises are shown up for what they are? Doubt arises:

Here I have fallen into bewilderment, Master Gotama, here I have fallen into confusion, and the measure of confidence I had gained through previous conversation with Master Gotama has now disappeared.

<sup>24</sup> S.V.XII.iii.7 'Tatha-Suttaṃ' ('Thus Sutta')

<sup>25</sup> The author is here referring to the latency of views (*diṭṭh-ānusaya*). For the seven latencies, please see below, p.218.

<sup>26</sup> At this point in the Dhamma talk, the author asked his audience please to watch carefully as the translator lit a very small candle.

Poor Vacchagotta! And what happened to him happens all the time, especially today. We go to the Dhamma, thinking that there we shall find support for our metaphysical ramblings.<sup>27</sup> Then, because the Dhamma does not provide such answers, we lose faith in The Buddha's enlightenment. That is the condition for our 'improving' and 'modernizing' the Dhamma.<sup>28</sup> Let us see The Buddha explain this phenomenon further to Vacchagotta:

**It is enough to cause you bewilderment, Vaccha, enough to cause you confusion.**

**For this Dhamma, Vaccha, is profound** (*gambhīro*), **hard to see** (*duddaso*), **hard to understand** (*durānubodho*), **peaceful** (*santo*), **sublime** (*paṇīto*), **unattainable by mere reasoning** (*atakkāvacarō*), **subtle** (*nipuṇo*), **to be experienced by the wise** (*paññita-vedanīyo*).

**It is hard for you to understand it when you hold another view, accept another teaching, approve of another teaching, pursue a different training, follow a different teacher.**

One moment Vacchagotta was full of faith in The Buddha, on the right path, and the next, he is full of doubt, on the wrong path. That is what happens when we investigate the Dhamma with other views in mind. Looking two ways at once, we get cross-eyed, and stray off The Buddha's Eightfold Path onto the path to the garden of *Adhamma*.

Vacchagotta, however, was fortunate, for He had The Buddha to guide Him, and The Buddha now said:

**So, I shall question you about this in return, Vaccha. Answer as you deem fit.**

**What do you think, Vaccha? Suppose a fire were burning before you.**

**Would you know: 'This fire is burning before me'?**

(I would, Master Gotama.)

Suppose we lit a candle. Would we know: 'This candle is burning before me?'<sup>29</sup>

**If someone were to ask you, Vaccha: 'What does this fire that burns before you burn in dependence on?'; being asked thus, what would you answer?**

(Being asked thus, Master Gotama, I would answer: 'This fire burns in dependence on grass and sticks.')

<sup>27</sup> RAMBLINGS: If you describe a speech or piece of writing as someone's ramblings, you are saying that it is meaningless because the person who said or wrote it was very confused or insane. ☐ The official dismissed the speech as the ramblings of a desparate lunatic. (CCED)

<sup>28</sup> Here, the author pointed out we may also go to the Dhamma, and think that there is support for our metaphysical ramblings. That is far worse, perhaps, for it is the condition for our misrepresenting The Buddha. For then do we claim perhaps that He is a modernist, because He is pro-human rights, -equality, -democracy, -ecology, -individualism, and anti-tradition, -education, -custom, etc. A sutta that is very often so abused is the for that reason acclaimed '*Kālāma-Suttam*' (A.III.II.ii.5 '*Kesamutti-Suttam*' ('Kesamutti Sutta')). Other popular distortions are to claim that He says we should not be attached to the precepts (abuse of the simile of the man who lets go of the raft (M.I.iii.2 '*Alagadd-Ūpama-Suttam*' ('Snake Simile Sutta'))); to claim that He says bhikkhus need not keep all the rules in the Vinaya (abuse of His words to the Venerable Ānanda regarding the minor rules (D.ii.3 '*Mahā Parinibbāna-Suttam*' ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta'))); to claim that kamma does not have any results in the future, nor does His teaching span more than one life (abuse of His entire Teaching with reference to His description of the Dhamma as 'visible here and now' (*sandiṭṭhiko*), please see, for example, *ibid.*), and to claim that He declares suicide (and therefore euthanasia) 'blameless' (abuse of S.IV.I.II.iv.4 '*Channa-Suttam*', and M.III.v.2 '*Channa-Ovāda-Suttam*' ('Channa Advice Sutta')).

<sup>29</sup> The small candle that had earlier been lit was at this point still burning, and the author pointed at it.

What does the candle burn in dependence on? The candle burns in dependence on the wax and the wick.

**If that fire before you were to expire, would you know: ‘This fire before me has expired?’**  
(I would, Master Gotama.)

If the candle were to burn itself out, would we know: ‘This candle has burned itself out?’<sup>30</sup>

**If someone were to ask you, Vaccha: ‘When that fire before you expired, in which direction did it go: to the east, the west, the north, or the south?’; being asked thus, what would you answer?**

(That does not apply, Master Gotama. The fire burned in dependence on its fuel of grass and sticks.  
(When that is used up, if it does not get any more fuel, being without fuel, it is reckoned as expired.)

If we examine a candle, we see wax and a wick.

If we light the wick, it burns, and when it is steeped in hot wax, a steady, bright flame appears. If someone asks us: ‘Before it appeared on the wick, where was the steady, bright flame of that candle? Where was it waiting to appear? Where did it come from?’ Our answer is: ‘My friend, that does not apply. The steady bright flame appeared when I lit the wick and it got steeped in hot wax. Without my lighting the wick, and without the wax, the steady, bright flame would not have appeared.’

Then the candle burns itself out, and someone asks us: ‘Where did the flame go?’ Our answer is: ‘My friend, that does not apply. The flame has expired, because the conditions for its existence have ceased to be. The candle burned itself out, for there is no more wax or wick.’<sup>31</sup> Our answer is the same as Vacchagotta’s answer: **That does not apply.** And that was the same as The Buddha’s answer to the questions about rebirth of an arahant: the arahant has no longer the necessary supply of wax (the necessary supply of craving and ignorance), which means the question does not apply, for the premise for the question is not a premise. It is like asking whether a banana runs on petrol or diesel.<sup>32</sup>

Then The Buddha explained further:

**So too, Vaccha, the one who has attained to the highest has abandoned that matter by which one describing one who has attained to the highest might describe him.**

<sup>30</sup> At this point, the author pointed at the now expired candle.

<sup>31</sup> The Buddha explains this also to a Venerable Assaji: ‘Just as, Assaji, an oil lamp burns in dependence on the oil and the wick, and with the exhaustion of the oil and the wick it is extinguished through lack of fuel, so too, Assaji, when a bhikkhu feels a feeling terminating with... life.... He understands: “With the breakup of the body, following the exhaustion of life, all that is felt, not being delighted in, will become cool right here.”’ (S.III.II.iv.6 *‘Assaji-Suttam’*)

<sup>32</sup> The reader may refer also to The Buddha’s explanation of how the tune of a lute is not waiting inside the lute, but depends for its arising on the physical components of the lute and the musician’s playing on it (S.IV.I.IV.iv.9 *‘Vin-Opama-Suttam’* (‘Lute Simile Sutta’)). The *Visuddhi Magga* explains (Vis.xx PoP.96: ‘...there is no heap or store of unarisen mentality-materiality [mind-matter] prior to its [mind-matter’s] arising. When it arises, it does not come from any heap or store, and when it ceases, it does not go in any direction. There is nowhere any depository in the way of a heap or store or hoard of what has ceased. But just as there is no store (prior to its arising) of the sound that arises when a lute is played, nor does it come from any store when it arises, nor does it go in any direction when it ceases, nor does it persist as a store when it has ceased. But, on the contrary, not having been, it is brought into being owing to the lute, the lute’s neck, and the man’s appropriate effort, and having been, it vanishes. So too all material and immaterial states, not having been, are brought into being; having been, they vanish.’

He has cut it off at the root, made it like a palm stump, done away with it so that it is no longer subject to future arising.

The one who has attained to the highest is liberated in terms of matter, Vaccha; he is profound, immeasurable, unfathomable like the ocean.

- The term 'is reborn' does not apply;
- the term 'is not reborn' does not apply;
- the term 'both is reborn and not reborn' does not apply;
- the term 'is neither reborn nor not reborn' does not apply.

This explanation The Buddha gave for also sensation, perception, formation, and consciousness.

Here, The Buddha explained that the arahant is **profound, immeasurable, unfathomable like the ocean**. We may then forget that it is a simile, and think it is mystical metaphysics instead: 'Aha! You see! The highest attainment is to become one with the profound, immeasurable, unfathomable Absolute! The Universal Consciousness! The Primordial Mind! The Void!'<sup>33</sup> This happens because we cannot let go of our metaphysical dreams: no matter how The Buddha explains things, we must have things our way. And then may we contrive a vast metaphysics based on this spurious understanding: that is our most unfortunate kamma, rising out of the metaphysical miasma<sup>34</sup> that is conceivings, conjectures, I-making, mine-making, and the latency to conceit: in short, owing to lust, hatred and delusion. Adhering to such a view, we go from profound, immeasurable and unfathomable confusion, to even more profound confusion, even more immeasurable confusion, and even more unfathomable confusion: to continued rebirth, ageing and death, even in the animal world or hell.

Not so Vacchagotta. Now, at last, he let go of his metaphysics, and listened with respect to The Buddha's teaching. Being obviously no fool, he now understood that The Buddha's Teaching rises above all and any metaphysics. To explain, he too gave a most excellent simile:

**Master Gotama, suppose there was a great sal tree not far from a village or town, and impermanence wore away its branches and foliage, its bark and sapwood, so that on a later occasion (being divested of branches and foliage, divested of bark and sapwood), it became pure, consisting entirely of heartwood.**

**So too, this discourse of Master Gotama's is divested of branches and foliage, divested of bark and sapwood, and is pure, consisting entirely of heartwood.**

And with this declaration of renewed faith, empowered now by wisdom, Vacchagotta took again (enthusiastic) refuge in The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.

The Buddha's Teachings are divested of the branches and foliage that are conceivings and conjectures, divested of the bark and sapwood that is I-making, mine-making and the latency of conceit: The Buddha's Teachings are the True Dhamma (*Sa-Dhamma*), which is pure, consisting entirely of the Truth.

When we see Vacchagotta again go to The Buddha for advice, we see he now asks no metaphysical questions.<sup>35</sup> Now his question is brief and to the point:

<sup>33</sup> For an analysis of these wrong views about Nibbāna, please see above p.142.

<sup>34</sup> MIASMA: 1 unhealthy or unpleasant mist, etc: A miasma rose from the marsh. 2 (fig) bad atmosphere or influence: a miasma of despair. (OALD)

<sup>35</sup> M.II.iii.3 '*Mahā-Vacchagotta-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Vacchagotta Sutta')



**It would be good if Master Gotama would teach me in brief the wholesome and unwholesome.**

This question applies, most seriously. For if we do not know the difference between the wholesome and the unwholesome, how can we even begin to think of attaining Nibbāna? Hence, The Buddha went straight to His answer, and explained that lust, hatred and delusion are unwholesome, and their opposites wholesome; that killing, theft, venereal misconduct, lies, slander, abuse, prattle, covetousness, ill-intention and wrong view are unwholesome, whereas abstention from those ten courses of action are wholesome.<sup>36</sup> And He explained that with the end of craving, a bhikkhu is no longer reborn, has lived the holy life, has done what had to be done, etc.

Thinking arahantship was the domain of only a Buddha,<sup>37</sup> Vacchagotta then asked if there was any one such bhikkhu who had reached this state. The Buddha explained that there were not only one hundred bhikkhus who had reached this state, not only two, three, four or five hundred, but far more bhikkhus who had reached this state. Then Vacchagotta asked the same about bhikkhunis, and got the same answer. Then Vacchagotta asked if there was any one male lay-disciple who had become a non-returner, due to be reborn in the Brahma-world, and to attain arahantship there?<sup>38</sup> And The Buddha gave the same answer, and the same answer when asked about female lay-disciples, and the same answer with regard to lay-disciples who had become once-returners, and the same answer with regard to lay-disciples who had become stream-enterers: in all cases, not one hundred, not two, three, four or five hundred, but far more. All these disciples (monastic and lay) were assured the end of rebirth and suffering, assured arahantship.

To this, Vacchagotta gave a detailed analysis of how perfect it made the holy life as taught by The Buddha, and he concluded:

...because, Master Gotama, bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, male lay-disciples clothed in white (both those leading lives of celibacy and those enjoying sensual pleasures), and female lay-disciples clothed in white (both those leading lives of celibacy and those enjoying sensual pleasures), are accomplished in this Dhamma, this holy life is in that way complete.

And here again, Vacchagotta gave a most excellent simile to explain.

Just as the river Ganges inclines towards the sea, slopes towards the sea, flows towards the sea, and merges with the sea, so too Master Gotama's assembly with its homeless ones and its householders inclines towards Nibbāna, slopes towards Nibbāna, flows towards Nibbāna, and merges with Nibbāna.

Again, and again enthusiastically, Vacchagotta took refuge in The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. But this time his refuge-taking was so complete that he asked for ordination. And as the now Venerable Vacchagotta, he undertook the

<sup>36</sup> For details, please see also below brief analysis of Right View, Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood, 'Complete Discrimination', Appendix II, p.233ff.

<sup>37</sup> Please see the commentary to this sutta.

<sup>38</sup> Here, the author explained that The Buddha had on a previous occasion explained to Vacchagotta that it is impossible for a lay-disciple to attain arahantship, and remain a layperson: 'Vaccha, there is no householder who, without abandoning the fetter of householdership, on the dissolution of the body has made an end to suffering.' (M.II.iii.1 'Te-vijja-Vacchagotta-Suttam' ('Triple Knowledge Vacchagotta Sutta')). That may be why Vacchagotta did not now ask whether any lay-disciples had attained arahantship.

higher trainings of a bhikkhu (the higher morality, higher mind, and higher wisdom), and within two weeks he became a non-returner. Then he asked The Buddha for further instruction so as to reach the goal of the holy life, arahantship. The Buddha taught him how to develop his Samatha-Vipassanā further, which he then did, and not long after, dwelling alone, withdrawn from society, diligent, ardent and resolute, the Venerable Vacchagotta attained to the three knowledges: knowledge of past lives, knowledge of the divine eye, and knowledge of the destruction of the taints. The Venerable Vacchagotta had done what had to be done, followed The Buddha's instructions: he was an arahant.

With the triple knowledge of arahantship, there was no more research for the Venerable Vacchagotta to do. He had reached the one and same conclusive conclusion as The Buddha and all other arahants. With the attainment of Nibbāna, the candle of ignorance, craving and rebirth had burned itself out. Full of joy, the Venerable Vacchagotta uttered a verse:<sup>39</sup>

**The triple knowledge is mine, and skilled I am in Samatha.  
My own benefit have I gained, [and] completed The Buddha's Teaching.**

Later, seeing some bhikkhus going to see The Buddha, he asked them please to do obeisance in his name, with their heads at the Buddha's feet, and say:

**Venerable Sir, the bhikkhu Vacchagotta does obeisance with his head at the Blessed One's feet.**

And say:

**The Blessed One has been worshipped by me, the Sublime One has been worshipped by me.**

Now, arahants have done away with the latency of conceit, hence their innate modesty. Hence too, they never go around speaking of their meditation and attainments in public: such things are not only a sign of conceit and immodesty, they are disallowed by The Buddha in accordance with the Vinaya.<sup>40</sup> So when

<sup>39</sup> Thg.I.xii.2 *'Vacchagotta-Tthera Gāthā'* ('Vacchagotta Elder Verses')

<sup>40</sup> If a bhikkhu speaks of his meditation to someone who is not fully ordained (for example, if he describes his meditation to a *sāmaṇera* or lay-disciple, or describes meditational experiences in a book to be read by such readers), he has committed an offence against the Vinaya: 'Should any bhikkhu announce to one not fully ordained any superhuman state (*uttari-manussa-dhamma*) [regarding himself], if it is true, it entails expiation [a *Pācittiya* offence, which must be confessed to another bhikkhu. Vin.Pāc.i.8].' (If it is a deliberate lie, it is a *Parājika* offence (Vin.Par.4), which means the bhikkhu has ceased to be a bhikkhu, and cannot take the full ordination again in this life.) In His analysis of this rule, The Buddha explains 'one not fully ordained' (*an-upasampanno*) as one who is not either a bhikkhu or bhikkhuni. And He explains 'announce' as both a direct or indirect statement, and 'superhuman state' as: any of the four jhānas, the three liberations (*vimokkha*), the higher states of concentration and higher attainments, the three knowledges, the four foundations of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of enlightenment, the Noble Eightfold Path, the fruits of stream-entry, once-return, non-return or arahantship (a bhikkhu cannot directly or indirectly declare to someone without the higher ordination that he is a noble one (*ariya*)), the destruction of lust, hatred and delusion, the absence of lust, hatred and delusion (as in jhāna concentration, and even to some extent access concentration), and delight in the seclusion of the jhānas. In short, this means a bhikkhu cannot to someone without the higher ordination speak about any whatsoever aspect of his practice (or write about his practice in a book that is to be published) without committing an offence against the Vinaya as laid down by The Buddha. Even if he does so by accident, it is an offence that must be confessed. Those who made such declarations before the rule was laid down (as may be seen in the suttas) did for that reason, of course, not commit an offence.

arahants declared their arahantship to The Buddha, they would say it in an indirect way, such as did the Venerable Vacchagotta now. But the bhikkhus who brought the message did not know the meaning of the Venerable Vacchagotta's message. So The Buddha explained:

**Bhikkhus, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I already knew of the bhikkhu Vacchagotta: 'The bhikkhu Vacchagotta has attained the triple true knowledge, and has great supernormal power and might.'**

**And devas also told me this: 'The bhikkhu Vacchagotta has attained the triple true knowledge, and has great supernormal power and might.'**

Thank you.

Today's talk is the first of two talks on arahantship that will conclude our seven talks on the Third Noble Truth: the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccam*). We shall today discuss *moderna*, progressive Buddhist culture.<sup>1</sup>

Let us first look at the time a King Ajātasattu went to see The Buddha.<sup>2</sup>

He said:

There are, Venerable Sir, many kinds of occupation, such as elephant drivers, cavalymen, charioteers, archers, standard bearers, squires, thanes, knights, scouts, élite warriors, great warriors, cuirassed warriors, labourers, butlers, barbers, bath attendants, cooks, garlands makers, washermen, weavers, basket-makers, potters, arithmeticians, accountants, and many other occupations of the same kind.<sup>3</sup>

As we can see, the socio-economic conditions of ancient India were in effect identical to the socio-economic conditions of so-called *moderna* 'progressive' society.

The king continued:

They all enjoy here and now visible fruits of their occupation. They maintain themselves, and their parents and children and friends, in happiness and comfort.

To ascetics and Brahmins who are devoted to the religious life they give gifts regularly: gifts that lead to rebirth in the deva realm, that ripen in happiness, and have bliss as their result.

Here, ancient Indian culture was very different from *moderna* 'progressive' culture. They looked after themselves, their parents and children, and they venerated men and women whose lives were devoted to something higher, and gave them the requisites of life, knowing that such action led to a happy rebirth. *Moderna*, 'progressive' culture, however, has no time for such things: it has social institutions look after parents (homes for the aged), look after the sick (hospices, hospitals, etc.), and look after their children (crèches,<sup>4</sup> kindergartens,

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<sup>1</sup> CULTURE: 'n. CULTIVATION: the state of being cultivated: refinement the result of cultivation: a type of civilization... v.t. to cultivate: to improve... CULTURED cultivated: well educated: refined... UNCULTURED [CTCD]' '...n. trained and refined state of the understanding & manners & tastes, phases of this prevalent at a time or place... instilling of it by training [POD].' 'state of intellectual development of a society: twentieth century mass culture ° a period of high/low culture... development through training, exercise, treatment, etc: physical culture, ie developing one's muscles and fitness by doing exercises The culture of the mind is vital [OALD].'

<sup>2</sup> D.i.2 'Sāmañña-Phala-Suttaṃ' ('Asceticism Fruit Sutta')

<sup>3</sup> This listing would appear to reflect the king's world, with his standing army first. The Pali terms can be rendered according to the divisions of all ancient armies, and royal households. Some of the English terms may require an explanation: CAVALRYMAN = soldier on horseback; CHARIOTEER = soldier on chariot (small two-wheeled car drawn by horse, for one or two men standing); ARCHER = soldier on foot, who uses bow and arrow; STANDARD BEARER = soldier who carries the royal standard in battle and in peace; SQUIRE = assistant to knight, but of noble birth; THANE = holder of lands by military service, above freeman but not noble; KNIGHT = nobleman's high military rank; SCOUT = one sent out alone to obtain knowledge about the enemy; ELITE WARRIOR = specially trained, high quality troops; CUIRASS = body armour of leather/metal (the Pali is leather); LABOURER = this is not a slave, as a slave receives no remuneration; BUTLER = the servant in charge of the royal meals. For corroboration, please see PED.

<sup>4</sup> CRÉCHE: A CRÉCHE is a place where small children can be left to be looked after while their parents are working or doing something else. [BRIT] (in AM, use DAY NURSERY) (CCED)

youth centres, etc.). That way son and daughter, and mummy and daddy have more time to pursue ṁṁṁṁṁṁ ‘progressive’ culture, namely mental and material proliferation and confusion. Venerated are only men and women devoted to the lower cultures: media culture (the chattering classes),<sup>5</sup> body and sports culture, entertainment culture (pop-music, films and other mindless culture), the cultures of politics and endless conferences, the cultures of commerce, technology, and information (censored according to the lowest common denominator:<sup>6</sup> trivia/sensation): the scriptures are ever new statistics compiled by accountants, with the GNP (consumer culture) the measure of all things good. With such low culture, those who aim for a higher culture are disparaged: ‘Why can’t they do something useful!’<sup>7</sup> Hence, to be able to pursue their higher culture, ṁṁṁṁṁṁ ascetics and Brahmins must sing for their supper,<sup>8</sup> which means properly to pursue their culture is impossible. Thus, although in essence the socio-economic conditions of civilizations do not change, in essence their culture (e.g. education and values<sup>9</sup>) inevitably regresses.

Let us then listen to King Ajātasattu’s question:

Is it possible, Venerable Sir, to declare any such visible fruit of asceticism?

His question was, in short: ‘What are the fruits of the bhikkhu’s culture, in this life?’ It is worth noting that King Ajātasattu took it for granted that a cultured bhikkhu serves a very important role in society, as a means for householders to culture the superior fruits of *dāna*. The question was, rather, aimed at the fruits of the bhikkhu’s culture for the bhikkhu himself.

In detail, The Buddha explained fourteen progressive fruits of the bhikkhu’s culture (it is a long sutta). They are, in brief:

- 1) In ancient Indian culture, a bhikkhu was revered by good people, even had he been a slave before.

King Ajātasattu admitted that even he would do obeisance to and provide with requisites such a bhikkhu.

<sup>5</sup> CHATTERING CLASSES: The chattering classes are people such as journalists, broadcasters, or public figures who comment on events but have little or no influence over them. □ Radical feminism is currently the fashionable topic among the chattering classes. (CCED)

<sup>6</sup> LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR: If you say that something is designed to appeal to the lowest common denominator, you are critical of it because it is designed to be liked by the majority of people. □ Tabloid newspapers pander to the lowest common denominator. (CCED)

<sup>7</sup> Here, the author mentioned that a North American bhikkhu once told him that a supposedly adult and intelligent (but ṁṁṁṁṁṁ) man had once asked a bhikkhu: ‘How does the bhikkhu’s practice benefit the Gross National Product?’

<sup>8</sup> SING FOR ONE’S SUPPER: before getting something, one must deserve it by having done a particular task: the idiom refers to someone having to sing before they are able to get their supper. The Buddha explains: ‘The Enlightened Ones reject such food over which verses have sung. As such a principle exists, O Brahmin, this is their rule of conduct.’ (S.I.vii.8 ‘*Aggika-Suttam*’ (Aggika is the name of The Buddha’s interlocutor.))

<sup>9</sup> VALUES: ‘The values of a person or group are the moral principles and beliefs that they think are important. □ The countries of South Asia also share many common values... The Health Secretary called for a return to traditional family values. ...young Muslims who feel little sympathy for the values of their adopted country [CCED].’ ‘Your values are the principles you have which control your behaviour: • family/moral/traditional/Victorian values • She believes strongly in basic values like courage, loyalty and honesty.’ (CIDE)

- 2) The same for a bhikkhu who had been a free man.
- 3) Whatever the external culture, the bhikkhu's internal culture is to culture morality by culturing the Vinaya laid down by The Buddha.

For example, The Buddha explained: the bhikkhu

- **eats in only one part of the day** (contentment culture),
  - **he abstains from accepting gold and silver** (no money culture under any form or pretext),
  - **he abstains from buying and selling, he abstains from such wrong livelihood** (*micchā ājīvā*) (no commercial culture), **he abstains from such low arts** (*tiracchāna-vijjāya*). For example,<sup>10</sup>
    - × no fortune-telling,
    - × no exorcism of demons and ghosts,
    - × no recital of charms,
    - × no settlement of auspicious dates for certain events (marriages, business, etc.),
    - × no ceremonial bathing (no sprinkling of 'holy' water, etc.),
    - × no practice of medicine, etc.
- } (no low culture)

Furthermore, the bhikkhu

- **guards the doors of his sense faculties** (*indriyesu gutta-dvāro*) (culture of restraining eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind);
- he is possessed of mindfulness (*sati*) and full awareness (*sampajañña*) (culture of knowing what one is at all times doing by body, speech and mind);
- he is content (*santuṭṭho*) (no consumer culture).

Having now completed this preliminary part of his culture, the bhikkhu progresses to a secluded dwelling (*vivittaṃ senāsanaṃ*), for meditation culture. And his preliminary culture enables him to overcome the five hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*): covetousness for the world<sup>11</sup> (*abhiḥjaṃ loke*), ill-intention (*byāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thina middha*), restlessness and worry (*uddhacca kukkucca*), and doubt (*vicikicchā*).

With all these preliminaries done, the bhikkhu is now able to progress to what is the third fruit of asceticism: he attains the first jhāna.

- 4) He progresses to the second jhāna.
- 5) He progresses to the third jhāna.
- 6) He progresses to the fourth jhāna: by which time his mind is like a cultured pearl, pure and bright.
- 7) He progresses to culture Vipassanā, and knows and sees mind-matter as they really are.

<sup>10</sup> These activities are also wrong livelihood (*micchā ājīva*). Habitual practice of such things is in the Vinaya explained as corrupting the faith of the laity, as it leads them onto the path of what is not Dhamma. Hence, it constitutes a most serious offence against the Vinaya. For a full and lengthy analysis, please see Vin.Saṅ.xiii 'Saṅghadisesa' (The last of thirteen most serious offences that require meeting of the Sangha). Please see wrong livelihood mentioned also below, p. 240.

<sup>11</sup> COVETOUSNESS FOR THE WORLD: this hindrance is a manifestation of sensual desire (*kāma-cchanda*).

- 8) He progresses to culture a mind-made body.<sup>12</sup>
- 9) He progresses to culture going through the earth, walking on water and flying, etc.
- 10) He progresses to culture hearing sounds near and far, in the human realm and other realms.
- 11) He progresses to reading the mind of others.
- 12) He progresses to seeing thousands and thousands of past lives, even past world contractions and expansions.
- 13) He progresses to seeing how beings progress in *samsāra* according to their culture: he sees how good culture gives happy rebirths, and bad culture gives unhappy rebirths.
- 14) He progresses to become an arahant.

We may now think:<sup>13</sup>How can such a bhikkhu be of any benefit to anyone! How can he culture his spiritual and intellectual faculties in the forest, cloistered<sup>14</sup>from society!<sup>15</sup>He is nothing more than a cowardly lazy-bones, sponging off<sup>14</sup>the faithful, thinking only of his own happiness and salvation, with no care for others: this is not true Buddhist culture!

The true bhikkhu courageously and selflessly sacrifices his whole life to the service of others!

And we may give an alternative list of the fruits of the progressive bhikkhu's culture:

- ☞ The **modern** bhikkhu studies academic aspects of Buddhist culture in order that he may obtain an academic degree, which to append to his venerable monastic name as a title of respect;
- ☞ he studies also subjects that may help him know how compassionately to instruct the suffering people in the profound Dhamma in a way more compatible with the needs of this **modern** world, for example: media studies, alternative medicines, astrology, management (skilfully to manage a temple), psychology, sociology, philosophy, and the doctrines and practices of the different traditions within the Buddhist religion, as well as

<sup>12</sup> For how to develop these powers, please see reference footnote 32, p.203.

<sup>13</sup> The gist of what follows, and the examples (and in many cases the very wording) have not been invented by the author but gleaned from **modern** 'Buddhist' publications.

<sup>14</sup> CLOISTER: 'convent or monastery... CLOISTERED secluded; sheltered: a cloistered life [OALD].'  
'These academics lead such a cloistered (=protected) life, cut off from the problems of the real world [CIDE].'  
'☐ ...the cloistered world of royalty. [CCED]'  
SPONGE ON/OFF SOMEBODY: 'live at another person's expense; get money, food, etc from somebody without giving or intending to give anything in return: *He always sponges off others.* [OALD]'

<sup>15</sup> Also in The Buddha's day there was the wrong view that seclusion, silence and non-involvement with society is detrimental to developing one's 'spiritual faculties'. The wanderer Nigrodha says: 'The ascetic Gotama's wisdom is destroyed by the solitary life, he is unused to assemblies, he is no good at conversation, he is right out of touch.' Having developed the divine ear through solitary meditation, The Buddha hears this, goes to see the wanderer, and after discussing the Dhamma with the wanderer, the wanderer 'was silent and upset, his shoulders drooped, he hung his head, and sat there downcast and bewildered'. (D.iii.2 'Udumbarika Sīha-Nāda-Suttam' ('Udumbarika Lion's Roar Sutta'))

- the doctrines and practices of other religions;
- ☉ he initiates, masters, and supervises fund-raising for hospitals, Buddhist schools, departments of higher Buddhist studies in universities, Buddhist temples and monasteries, meditation centres, and Buddhist statues and pagodas;
  - ☉ he runs Buddhist nurseries, schools, departments of higher Buddhist instruction in universities; he runs orphanages, and hospices (even animal orphanages);
  - ☉ he runs rehabilitation centres for prostitutes, drug addicts, etc.;
  - ☉ he visits prisons and army-camps;
  - ☉ he gives entertaining talks on Buddhism;
  - ☉ he writes, publishes, and sells entertaining books on Buddhism,
  - ☉ he masters entertaining websites on Buddhism;
  - ☉ he advises politicians and ministers,<sup>16</sup>
  - ☉ he speaks out in the media on important modern issues;
  - ☉ he gives Buddhist blessings<sup>17</sup> and ceremonial bathings with holy water to newborn babies, the sick, the dying, the aged, and soldiers at war . . . even trees;<sup>18</sup>
  - ☉ he chants holy Buddhist texts with beautifully harmonious, varying and vibrant tones and rhythms;<sup>19</sup>
  - ☉ he supervises Buddhist weddings and funerals, and Buddhist festivals and processions;
  - ☉ he organizes and participates in inter-religious dinners and confer-

<sup>16</sup> The *Visuddhi-Magga* explains improper resorts for bhikkhus: ‘...he dwells associated with kings, kings’ ministers, sectarians, sectarians’ disciples...’ (Vis.i PoP.45) Please see further below, footnote 34, p.203.

<sup>17</sup> Here, the author explained that blessings are incompatible with the Dhamma, for they require the view that one has been mystically empowered by one’s god to bestow divine favour upon others, or worse, that one is/has become oneself possessed of such powers (one is a god). Not even The Buddha gave blessings: and trees are inanimate matter (one might as well bless a television or a bowl of noodle-soup).

<sup>18</sup> Here, the author mentioned that trees are inanimate matter. With proper meditation, one may penetrate to ultimate matter and see the ultimate elements of matter. Then will one see that animate matter possesses a vital element that in the Pali is called *jīvit-indriya* (life faculty). When one examines trees, one will see that the only vital element is that of beings living in the tree: the vegetal matter is without this element. With further examination, one may see that the growth of vegetal matter is predominantly owing to materiality produced by heat.

<sup>19</sup> The Buddha explains: ‘These five, bhikkhus, are the five disadvantages to one reciting the Dhamma in a melodious voice. What five? [1] Either he is himself carried away by the sound; [2] or others are carried away by it; [3] or householders grumble; [4] or as he strives for purity of sound, there is a break in his concentration [concentrating on the sound, he forgets what comes next]; [5] and people who follow fall into wrong view... [For] whoever [that] recites so, there is a *dukkata* offence (*āpatti dukkaṭassā*).’ (Vin.Cv.V and A.V.V.i.9 ‘*Gīta:ssara-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Melodious Voice Sutta’)) It is also an offence against the Vinaya for bhikkhus (and the eight precepts for lay-people) to listen to or play music, and watch or do acrobatics, etc. Please see, for example, D.i.2 ‘*Sāmañña-Phala-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Fruits of Asceticism’).



ences.<sup>20</sup>

He organizes exciting tours to sites of ancient Buddhist culture, and much, much more: all out of deepfelt compassion for suffering humanity.

And we may think: This is true Buddhist culture! Not the narrowly monastic perspective of the cloistered life of monkery,<sup>21</sup> running away from reality!<sup>22</sup>

Is this familiar? It is too familiar, and sounds quite impressive, does it not? Much activity for the bhikkhu, talking with very many people in society.

But The Buddha? When explaining the fourteen progressive fruits of the bhikkhu's culture to King Ajātasattu, The Buddha gave a simile for each fruit. The last one was His simile for arahantship:

Just as if, Your Majesty, there were a lake in the mountains (clear, limpid, & undisturbed), where a man with good eyesight (standing on the edge) could see shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also shoals of fish swimming about and resting.

It would occur to him: 'This lake is clear, limpid and undisturbed. Here are these shells, gravel and pebbles, and also these shoals of fish swimming about and resting.'

Arahantship is clarity and peace: like looking into a crystal-clear aquarium, where one can see everything in perfect detail.

So too, Your Majesty, when his mind is thus concentrated, completely pure and bright... the bhikkhu directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the destruction of the taints (*Āsavānaṃ Khaya-Nāṇa*).

[1] He understands as it really is: 'This is suffering (*so idaṃ dukkha*).'

[2] He understands as it really is: 'This is the origin of suffering (*ayaṃ dukkha samudayo*).'

[3] He understands as it really is: 'This is the cessation of suffering (*ayaṃ dukkha nirodho*).'

[4] He understands as it really is: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering (*ayaṃ dukkha nirodha gāminī paṭipadā*).'

[1] He understands as it really is: 'These are the taints (*ime āsava*).'

[2] He understands as it really is: 'This is the origin of the taints (*ayaṃ āsava samudayo*).'

[3] He understands as it really is: 'This is the cessation of the taints (*ayaṃ āsava nirodho*).'

[4] He understands as it really is: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of the taints (*ayaṃ āsava nirodha gāminī paṭipadā*).'

His mind, knowing thus, seeing thus, is

[1] liberated from the taint of sensuality (*kām-āsava*),

[2] liberated from the taint of existence (*bhav-āsava*),

[3] liberated from the taint of ignorance (*avijj-āsava*).

With liberation, there is the knowledge of liberation (*vimuttasmiṃ vimuttamiti ñāṇaṃ hoti*).

He understands: 'Birth is ended (*khīṇā jāti*), the holy life has been lived (*vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ*), done is what had to be done (*kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ*).

There is no more coming to any state of being (*nāparaṃ itthattāyā*).'

This is the fruit of arahantship, which is the end of the cultures of ignorance, craving, rebirth and suffering. Further progress in *samsāra* is impossible. Then

<sup>20</sup> Please see above footnote 16, p.199.

<sup>21</sup> MONKERY (contemptuous): monasticism: behaviour of monks: monks collectively (CTCD)

<sup>22</sup> Here, the author mentioned that there is also the widespread view that a better practice is to be obtained by householders, because they have not 'escaped' in that way. This view existed also in The Buddha's day: please see M.II.v.9 'Subha-Suttaṃ' (Subha is the Brahmin student who is The Buddha's interlocutor).

The Buddha gives His verdict on arahantship:

**This, Your Majesty, is a visible fruit of asceticism** (*sandiṭṭhikaṃ sāmāñña-phalaṃ*), [that is, compared to] **the previous visible fruits of asceticism** (*purimehi sandiṭṭhikehi sāmāññaphalehi*), **more excellent, and also more sublime** (*abhikkantatarañ-ca paṇītatarāñ-ca*).

**As for another visible fruit of asceticism** (*sandiṭṭhikā sāmāññaphalā aññaṃ*), **than this fruit of asceticism** (*sandiṭṭhikaṃ sāmāññaphalaṃ*), **higher and more sublime** (*uttaritarāṃ vā paṇītatarāṃ vā*), **there is none** (*n-atthi*).

Thus spoke the Buddha: the bhikkhu's culture has no fruit higher than arahantship. It sounds neither impressive nor unimpressive, for it is without measure.

In many ways, and throughout His teaching, again and again and again, The Buddha praises arahantship as the highest of progressive Buddhist culture. For example:<sup>23</sup>

**So this holy life, bhikkhus, does not have gain, honour, and renown for its benefit, nor the attainment of virtue** (*sīla*) **for its benefit, nor the attainment of concentration** (*samādhi*) **for its benefit, nor knowledge and vision** (*ñāṇa dassana*) **for its benefit.**

**But it is this unshakeable liberation of mind** (*akuppā ceto-vimutti*) **that is the goal, bhikkhus, of this holy life** (*etaḍ-attham-idaṃ, bhikkhave, brahma-cariyaṃ*), **its heartwood** (*etaṃ sāraṃ*), **its end** (*etaṃ pariyoṣaṃ*).

Thus speaks The Buddha.

Furthermore, the bhikkhu whose culture is not to progress towards arahantship is by The Buddha called a fool (*bāla*).<sup>24</sup> And He explains:<sup>25</sup>

**These six things, bhikkhus, lead to failure for a bhikkhu in training. What six?**

- [1] **Delight in activity** (*kamm-ārāmatā*),
- [2] **delight in talk** (*bhass-ārāmatā*),
- [3] **delight in sleep** (*nidd-ārāmatā*),
- [4] **delight in society** (*saṅgaṇik-ārāmatā*),
- [5] **being unguarded as to the sense doors** (*indriyesu a-gutta-dvārātā*),
- [6] **and immoderate in eating** (*bhojane a-mattaññutā*).

[overeating, such as eating in the afternoon and evening]

Such a bhikkhu regresses, and The Buddha explains that such an uncultured bhikkhu is incapable of progressing towards right view (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*).<sup>26</sup>

Now we may understand that when we think a bhikkhu who remains aloof from society is of no benefit to society, it is owing to covetousness for the world (*abhijjhaṃ loke*) (sensuality),<sup>27</sup> owing to doubt (*vicikicchā*) (insufficient faith in

<sup>23</sup> M.I.iii.9 'Mahā-Sār-Opama-Suttaṃ' ('Great Heartwood-Simile Sutta')

<sup>24</sup> The Buddha explains: '... the fool has not lived the holy life for the complete destruction of suffering. Therefore, with the breakup of the body, the fool fares on to [another] body. Faring on to [another] body, he is not freed from birth, ageing and death....' S.II.I.ii.9 'Bāla-paṇḍita-Suttaṃ' ('Fool-Wise-Man Sutta') This sutta is discussed above, p.173.

<sup>25</sup> A.VI.iv.1 'Sekha-Suttaṃ' ('In Training Sutta')

<sup>26</sup> The Buddha explains: 'Indeed, bhikkhus, that a bhikkhu enjoying society, finding enjoyment in society, devoting himself to enjoyment in society... shall become perfect in right view: that cannot be....' (A.VI.vii.4 'Saṅgaṇik-ārāma-Suttaṃ' ('Society Enjoyment Sutta'))

<sup>27</sup> The Buddha explains that the bhikkhu who gets 'caught by human beings' will not attain Nibbāna: 'And what, bhikkhu, is getting caught by human beings? Here, someone lives in association with laypeople; he rejoices with them and sorrows with them; he is happy when they are

the Buddha's enlightenment, in the validity of His Word), and, of course, owing to ignorance: being uncultured in Buddhist culture.<sup>28</sup> That is why such views derive from cultures alien to the Dhamma.

As with all views, this modern view existed also in The Buddha's day. There was once a Brahmin called Saṅgārava who told The Buddha that Brahmins were of great service to society, because they cultured sacrifice, and made others do the same. But, said Saṅgārava:

**Now, Master Gotama, he who goes forth from this or that family, from the home to the homeless life, tames only one self (*ekam-attānaṃ dameti*), calms only one self (*ekam-attānaṃ sameti*), leads to Nibbāna only one self (*ekam-attānaṃ parinibbāpeti*).**

**His going forth is for the sake of a practice of merit practised by only one person.**

To this The Buddha explained that there arises in the world an

**Arahant, Perfectly Enlightened (*Sammā-Sambuddho*); Possessed of Knowledge and Conduct (*Vijjā-Caraṇa-Sampanno*); Accomplished (*Sugato*); Knower of worlds (*Lokavidū*); Unsurpassable Trainer of men (*Anuttaro purisadamma Sārathi*); Teacher of devas and human beings (*Satthā deva-manussānaṃ*); Enlightened (*Buddho*); Blessed (*Bhagavā*).**

He says:

**Come! This is the way, this the practice, which I have practised and realized with true knowledge, and by which I make known the unsurpassable of the holy life.**

**Come you too! Practise so that you too may have practised and realized with true knowledge the unsurpassable of the holy life, and abide therein.**

The unsurpassable (*anuttaraṃ*) is Nibbāna, and to abide therein is to abide in the Nibbāna attainment. Hence, The Buddha explained that when a Buddha teaches, He teaches progress to Nibbāna:

**Thus this teacher teaches Dhamma, and others too practise for that. Moreover, there are many hundreds, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands of such.**

**Now what do you think, Brahmin? Since this is so, is his going forth for the sake of a practice of merit practised by only one person or many people?**

(No, Master Gotama, it is for the sake of a practice practised by many people.)<sup>29</sup>

Then Saṅgārava told The Buddha how formerly (when the Sangha had been smaller), more bhikkhus had exhibited psychic powers, although now it was the opposite. To this, The Buddha explained the three kinds of miracle (*pāṭihāriyāni*): the miracle of psychic power (*iddhi-pāṭihāriyaṃ*), the miracle of mind-reading (*ādes-*

happy and sad when they are sad, and he involves himself in their affairs and duties. This is called getting caught by human beings.' (S.IV.IV.iv.4&5 '*Paṭhama-(&Dutiya-)Dārukkhandaḥ-Opama-Suttam*' ('First (&Second) Log-Simile Sutta'))

<sup>28</sup> An example of a layman, a minister, being cultured in Buddhist culture may be found in M.III.i.8 '*Gopaka-Moggallāna-Suttam*' (Gopaka Moggallāna is the Brahmin who is The Buddha's interlocutor). He asks the Venerable: 'I hope, Master Ānanda, that the Bamboo Grove is pleasant, quiet and undisturbed by voices, with an atmosphere of seclusion, remote from people, favourable for meditation [jhāna].'

<sup>29</sup> Here, the author explained that if one analysed the Brahmins' practice, one would come up with the same result. Their practice of sacrifice benefitted only the one who practised it, and then they would teach. This, however, was not how The Buddha approached the problem, for the result would have been only that the Brahmin would have understood that his question was invalid. The result of The Buddha's way of approaching the problem was that the Brahmin gained faith.

*anā-pāṭihāriyam*), and the miracle of instruction (*anusāsani-pāṭihāriyam*).<sup>30</sup>

The miracle of psychic power we mentioned before: it is walking on water, flying, etc.<sup>31</sup> It is a miracle-making related to the body, whereas the miracle of mind-reading is miracle-making related to the mind: both these miracles are attained through jhāna culture.<sup>32</sup> Having explained these two miracles, The Buddha then explained the miracle of instruction.

**Here, someone instructs thus: ‘Apply your mind this way, do not apply your mind that way; pay attention this way, do not pay attention that way; give up this; attaining this, abide in it.’ This Brahmin, is called the miracle of instruction.**

Now The Buddha asked Saṅgārava which of the three miracles he thought best. Saṅgārava thought they were all impressive, but the miracle of instruction was the most impressive. And then Saṅgārava asked The Buddha if there were any bhikkhus other than The Buddha who possessed these three miracles. The Buddha replied:

**Yes, indeed, Brahmin. The bhikkhus possessed of these three miraculous powers are not just one or two or three, four or five hundred, but much more than that in number.**

And He explained that they were to be found in the bhikkhu Sangha.

Now, when The Buddha calls instruction a miracle, does he mean instruction just on how to give *dāna*, and how to keep the five precepts? Perhaps with some jokes thrown in for good measure, to raise a laugh? Or maybe an explanation of the Dhamma as an interesting, ‘scientific’ metaphysics? What do you think?

We are ill-advised to think that every single thing The Buddha teaches is unique to Buddhist culture. For example, The Buddha instructs a bhikkhu and *sāmaṇera* to give up the household habit of being a ‘rebel’, to give up the household habit of being ‘brave’ and ‘bold’, and therefore instructs the bhikkhu to avoid a wild elephant, a wild dog, a snake, a chasm, a cliff, to avoid unsuitable resorts (*agocara*) (such as a shopping centre, a market, a restaurant, a bar or discotheque), to avoid association with ministers or other politicians, to avoid association with teachers or disciples of another faith, to avoid association with bhikkhunis, or any other women,<sup>33</sup> and to avoid bad friends.<sup>34</sup> With regard to these instructions from the Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, we do our listeners a

<sup>30</sup> The Buddha discusses the three miracles also in D.i.11 ‘*Kevaṭṭa-Suttam*’ (Kevaṭṭa is the name of The Buddha’s interlocutor).

<sup>31</sup> The eighth and ninth fruits of asceticism explained to King Ajātasattu, above p.196.

<sup>32</sup> For details on how to develop these powers, please see Vis.xii ‘*Iddhividha Niddesa*’ (‘Psychic Power Description’)

<sup>33</sup> Bhikkhunis and female novices and trainees should contrariwise avoid association with men of any kind, excepting their appointed bhikkhu teacher.

<sup>34</sup> Please see M.I.i.2 ‘*Sabb-Āsava-Suttam*’ (‘All the Taints Sutta’) and for details on the unsuitable resorts, please see Vis.i PoP.45: ‘Here, someone has prostitutes as resort, or he has widows, old maids, eunuchs, bhikkhunis, or taverns as resort; or he dwells associated with kings, kings’ ministers, sectarians [other faiths], sectarians’ disciples, in unbecoming association with laymen; or he cultivates, frequents, honours such families as are faithless, untrusting, abusive and rude, who wish harm, wish ill, wish woe, wish no surcease of bondage [do not believe a bhikkhu should practise for the attainment of Nibbāna], for bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, for male and female devotees.’

disservice by saying: ‘Ah! See the infinite wisdom of The Buddha!’ Very much of The Buddha’s instruction was not unique to His Teaching, yet it accorded with the Dhamma.<sup>35</sup> Hence, when The Buddha explains His past lives, we see that *dāna*, the five/eight precepts, and *jhāna* were cultured by good people in ancient India even when there was no Buddhist culture:<sup>36</sup> it does not require Buddhahood to teach such rudimentary culture.

Hence, such instruction is not a miracle. The Buddha explains:<sup>37</sup>

**But that kind of good practice does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna, but only to rebirth in the Brahmā world.**

Instruction that accords with the Dhamma is not necessarily to be equated with the miracle of instruction. The English gentleman was once known for his courtesy, modesty, and truthfulness (qualities that accord with the Dhamma) but he did not for that reason progress to Nibbāna.

Instruction is a miracle only insofar as culture of it leads to the end of rebirth, ageing and death, which is Nibbāna. That is why The Buddha’s first explanation to Saṅgārava was that a Buddha says:

**Come! This is the way, this the practice, which I have practised and realized with true knowledge, and by which I make known the unsurpassable of the holy life.**

As we can see, this means also that the instructor instructs in what he himself has cultured. Otherwise, how can he instruct?<sup>38</sup>

For example, if in Malaysia one wants to make a living by giving instruction

<sup>35</sup> The Buddha explains it to a naked ascetic Kassapa: ‘There are, Kassapa, some ascetics and Brahmins, clever, subtle, experienced in disputation, hair splitters. They wander about, as it were, demolishing the metaphysics of others with their knowledge. And they with some of my points agree, with some points do not agree. What they sometimes say ‘Good!’ (*Sādhu!*) to, that I also sometimes say ‘Good!’ to. What they sometimes say ‘Not good!’ (*Na Sādhu!*) to, that I also sometimes say ‘Not good!’ to. What they sometimes say ‘Good!’ to, that I sometimes say ‘Not good!’ to. What they sometimes say ‘Not good!’ to, I sometimes say ‘Good!’ to.’ (D.i.8 ‘*Mahā-Sīha-Nāda-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Great Lion’s Roar Sutta’))

<sup>36</sup> e.g. M.II.iv.3 ‘*Makhādeva-Suttaṃ*’ (Makhādeva is the name of a king.) The Buddha explains: ‘He was a righteous king who ruled by the Dhamma, a great king who was established in the Dhamma. He conducted himself by the Dhamma among Brahmins and householders, among townspeople and countryfolk, and he observed the Uposatha days on the fourteenth, fifteenth, and eighth of the fortnight [and after eighty-four thousand years] he led the holy life.... By developing the four divine abidings [*mettā* *jhāna*, etc.]... he passed on to the Brahma world.’ And the Commentary explains that he was established in the ten wholesome courses of action: not engaging in killing, theft, venereal misconduct, lies, slander, harsh speech, idle chatter, covetousness, ill-intention and not holding the view that there is no fruit of kamma, rebirth, other realms of existence, etc. The Buddha explains also that He was Himself that king in a past life. In also M.III.-iii.9 ‘*Bāla-Paṇḍita-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Fool-Wise-Man Sutta’), The Buddha explains that the Wheel-Turning Monarch (who may appear independently of a Buddha’s dispensation) advises his people: ‘You should not kill living beings; ...take what has not been given... engage in venereal misconduct... speak falsehood... drink intoxicants...’ Many examples are found in The Buddha’s further accounts of His past lives, the so-called *Jātakas*.

<sup>37</sup> M.II.iv.3 ‘*Makhādeva-Suttaṃ*’ (Makhādeva is the name of a king.)

<sup>38</sup> Here, the author mentioned that bhikkhus are nonetheless disallowed by The Buddha to speak of their own practice to one who is un-ordained (*an-upasampanno*) in any whatsoever way. For details and the pertinent Vinaya rule, please see above footnote 40, p.193.

in English, one needs to know more than: ‘Me Tarzan, you Jane.’<sup>39</sup> One needs to have a degree in English, and one needs to speak standard English well and fluently, ideally as a native speaker, and one needs to have a large vocabulary, be well acquainted with grammar, standard pronunciation, spelling, etc. Otherwise, how can one lead one’s students through to their final exams? But the Dhamma is not a language, literature, philosophy or religion to be studied as an academic subject; it is an instruction on how to progress to arahantship. There is nothing at all in the Vinaya, Dhamma and Abhidhamma, that is merely theoretical: it is all for progressive culture towards arahantship, the end of rebirth, ageing, sickness and death. Hence, if instruction is to be a miracle, and worthy of The Buddha’s name, the instructor needs to speak from personal progressive culture of the noble search for arahantship:<sup>40</sup> the threefold training of higher morality (*adhi-sīle*)(Vinaya culture), higher concentration (*adhi-citte*)(Samatha culture), and higher wisdom (*adhi-paññāya*)(Vipassanā culture).

The instructor’s point of view must be from what The Buddha calls the palace of wisdom (*paññā-pāsāda*),<sup>41</sup> far above the madding crowd’s ignoble search for continued rebirth, ageing, sickness and death.

Hence, The Buddha explains that only insofar as one teaches for disenchantment, dispassion, and the cessation of those things, can one be called a bhikkhu who speaks the Dhamma (*Dhamma-kathiko bhikkhu*):<sup>42</sup>

**If, bhikkhu, for disenchantment towards, dispassion for, and the cessation of, ageing & death, one teaches the Dhamma, then can one be called ‘a bhikkhu who speaks the Dhamma (*Dhamma-kathiko bhikkhu*)’.**

**If, bhikkhu, for disenchantment towards, dispassion for, and the cessation of, birth, one teaches the Dhamma, then can one be called ‘a bhikkhu who speaks the Dhamma (*Dhamma-kathiko bhikkhu*)’.**

In the same way, The Buddha explains that only insofar as one teaches for disenchantment, dispassion, and the cessation of existence, of clinging, of craving, of feeling, of contact, of the six bases, of mentality-materiality, of consciousness, of formations, and of ignorance, can one be called **a bhikkhu who speaks the Dhamma** (*Dhamma-kathiko bhikkhu*).

Thus, the bhikkhu who speaks the Dhamma never tells jokes, because they arouse nothing other than lust in his audience: lust for formations, with a strong dose of ignorance thrown in. This can be difficult to understand, of course, unless one has properly undertaken the threefold training, unless one has ascended

<sup>39</sup> ME TARZAN, YOU JANE: this line is in common usage in Britain to describe very poor command of English. It comes from *Tarzan of the Apes* by US novelist Edgar Rice Burroughs.

<sup>40</sup> For The Buddha’s explanation of the Noble Search (for Nibbāna), versus the ignoble search (for continued birth, sickness, ageing and death), please see M.I.iii.6 ‘*Ariya-Pariyesanā-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Noble Search Sutta’).

<sup>41</sup> ‘Just as one upon the summit of a mountain beholds the groundlings, even so, when the wise man casts away heedlessness by heedfulness, and ascends the high palace of wisdom, this sorrowless sage beholds the sorrowing and foolish multitude.’ (Dhp.ii.8 ‘*Appamāda Vagga*’ (‘Heedfulness Chapter’))

<sup>42</sup> S.II.I.ii.6 ‘*Dhamma-Kathika-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Dhamma Speaker Sutta’). In S.III.I.xii.3 of the same name, the Buddha explains it as disenchantment, etc. towards the five aggregates, and in S.IV.-I.xv.10 ‘*Dhamma-Kathika-Puccha-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Dhamma Speaker Question Sutta’) the same with regard to the six internal bases (eye, ear, nose, etc.).

the narrow and steep stair to the palace of wisdom.

Unless that is the instructor's viewpoint, how can the instructor even begin to know Buddhist culture, even begin to explain Buddhist culture, and even begin to embody Buddhist culture? The Buddha is very clear about this:<sup>43</sup>

**Cunda, that one who is himself bogged down in the bog (*palipa-palipanno*)<sup>44</sup> should pull out another who is bogged down in the bog is impossible; that one who is not himself bogged down in the bog should pull out another who is bogged down in the bog is possible.**

**That one who is himself untamed (*a-danto*), undisciplined (*a-vinīto*), not attained to Nibbāna, (*a-pari-nibbuto*),<sup>45</sup> should tame another, discipline him, and help him attain to Nibbāna is impossible; that one who is himself tamed (*danto*), disciplined (*vinīto*), attained to Nibbāna (*pari-nibbuto*), should tame another, discipline him, and help him attain to Nibbāna is possible.**

Does it take a Perfectly Enlightened Buddha to understand this? Any old grandmamma in the village understands it just as well.<sup>46</sup>

This elementary truth about the miracle of instruction we see also when The Buddha exhorted the early Sangha of sixty arahants to go out and give the miracle of instruction. The Buddha emphasized that they had attained arahantship just as He had, and were therefore qualified to instruct:<sup>47</sup>

**I, bhikkhus, am freed from all snares, both heavenly and worldly.  
And you, bhikkhus, are freed from all snares, both heavenly and worldly.**

These sixty arahants were devoid of covetousness and grief for society,<sup>48</sup> which means there was no urge to be the 'holy' instructor, no urge to turn away from The Buddha towards society.

Hence, these arahants were suitably qualified instructors:

**Walk, bhikkhus, on tour, for the blessing of the many folk, for the happiness of the many folk, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the blessing, the happiness of devas and men. Let not two [of you] go together.**

**Teach the Dhamma, bhikkhus, which is lovely at the beginning, lovely in the middle, and lovely at**

<sup>43</sup> M.I.i.8 '*Sallekha-Suttam*' ('Effacement Sutta')

<sup>44</sup> BOG: n (area of) wet spongy ground formed of decaying vegetation... v BOG (something) down... (a) (cause something to) sink into mud or wet ground: The tank (got) bogged down in the mud. (b) (fig.) (cause something to) become stuck and unable to make progress: Our discussions got bogged down in irrelevant detail. (The literal usage of BOGGED DOWN is usually not used for people, but the author chose to do so in order to reflect the Pali wordplay *palipa-palipanno*.)

<sup>45</sup> A-PARINIBBUTO: a weaker translation is 'with [defilements] unquenched/unextinguished', which is the same as 'attained to Nibbāna'.

<sup>46</sup> In Sn.ii.8 '*Nāvā-Suttam*' ('Boat Sutta'), The Buddha also explains: 'As the man gone down into a river, a torrential flood of water, a swift stream;/He being carried along by the stream, how would he be able to make others cross?/ In the same way, not having discerned the Dhamma, without attending to the explanation (*a-nisāmay-attham*) by those of great learning (*bahu-ssutānaṃ*);/ himself not understanding, not gone beyond doubt (*a-viñña-kañkho*), how would he be able to make others understand?'

<sup>47</sup> Vin.Mv.I.8 '*Māra Kathā*' ('Māra Discourse')

<sup>48</sup> COVETOUSNESS AND GRIEF FOR THE WORLD (*loke abhijjhā-domanassam*): these are the first two hindrances to progress towards Nibbāna: 1) covetousness is a manifestation of sensual desire, 2) grief for/fretting/worry is a manifestation of ill-intention. The world = the five aggregates. The Buddha explains that these two hindrances must be overcome for one to be able to culture the four foundations of mindfulness and progress towards Nibbāna. (D.ii.9 '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna-Suttam*' ('Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta'))

the end.

Being arahants, they knew the Dhamma in its totality, for they had progressed from the beginning to the middle to the end. All the members of this the earliest Sangha had progressed from the culture of society to the culture of seclusion as bhikkhus. The Buddha had ordained them all with the words:<sup>49</sup>

*Ehi, bhikkhū, svākkhāto Dhammo; cara brahma-cariyaṃ sammā dukkhassa anta-kiriyaṃ.*  
Come, bhikkhu, well taught is the Dhamma; live the holy life for the complete end of suffering.

Even to this day, the bhikkhu's ordination is explicitly for him to progress towards realization of the Third Noble Truth.<sup>50</sup> Nowhere does The Buddha so much as suggest that one should ordain for the sake of serving society as an instructor. The very idea is absurd, for then is one's aim towards *samsāra* rather than Nibbāna, and in that case, one has not understood even the First Noble Truth.

When King Ajātasattu asked The Buddha about the fruits of the bhikkhu's culture, The Buddha enumerated nothing other than the progressive fruits that are the threefold higher culture towards arahantship, the highest fruit. But He knew that in the future, progressive Buddhist culture would be neglected in favour of regressive Buddhist culture. He spoke thus of five future dangers.

The first danger:<sup>51</sup>

☠ **There will be, bhikkhus (in the course of the future), bhikkhus uncultured in body, (*a-bhāvita-kāyā*) [no bodily restraint] uncultured in morality (*a-bhāvita-sīlā*) [no Vinaya culture], uncultured in mind (*a-bhāvita-cittā*) [no Samatha culture], uncultured in wisdom (*a-bhāvita-paññā*) [no Vipassanā culture].**

They (being uncultured in body, uncultured in morality, uncultured in mind, uncultured in wisdom) will give higher ordination (*upasampadā*) to others.

They will not be able to instruct them in the higher morality, the higher mind, the higher wisdom. So also they [the new bhikkhus] will be uncultured in body, uncultured in morality, uncultured in mind, uncultured in wisdom.

They (being uncultured in body, uncultured in morality, uncultured in mind, uncultured in wisdom) will give higher ordination to yet others.

Also they [the new bhikkhus] will not be able to instruct them [the yet others] in the higher morality, the higher mind, the higher wisdom, so also they [the yet others] will be uncultured in body, uncultured in morality, uncultured in mind, uncultured in wisdom.

This is the progressive undoing of Buddhist culture.

**Thus indeed, bhikkhus, with corrupt Dhamma, there is corrupt Vinaya (*Dhamma-sandosā, Vinaya-sandosā*); with corrupt Vinaya, there is corrupt Dhamma (*Vinaya-sandosā, Dhamma-sandosā*).**

☠ The second future danger, explains The Buddha, is the uncultured bhikkhus who are unable to instruct their students<sup>52</sup> in the higher morality,

<sup>49</sup> *Vin: Mahāvagga I.6 'Pañca-Vaggiya Kathā'* ('Group of Five Discourse')

<sup>50</sup> At his going-forth, the ordinand asks: 'Escape from the entire cycle of suffering, Nibbāna myself to realize, Venerable Sir; from the suffering of the cycle of rebirth myself to deliver, the going forth I request.'

<sup>51</sup> A.V.ii.9 '*Tatiya Anāgata-Bhaya-Suttaṃ*' ('Third Future Danger Sutta')

<sup>52</sup> STUDENTS: when a man has become a bhikkhu, he must for the first five years always live as a 'student', in dependence (*nissaya*) on a teacher. It is usually his preceptor who takes on that role, but the bhikkhu may also go elsewhere (away from his preceptor), his preceptor may go else-



mind and wisdom. And their students, being also uncultured, are also unable to instruct properly, which means also their students will be uncultured, and there is in this case too the progressive undoing of Buddhist culture.

☠ The third future danger is the uncultured bhikkhus who for that reason do not understand the Abhidhamma. Hence, they undertake discussion on Abhidhamma (*Abhidhamma-kathā*), disparaging and finding fault with the Abhidhamma. By doing so, their lack of proper culture is not only concealed by bluster: to the gullible it appears as sharp and profound wisdom regarding the True Incorrupt Dhamma, which means the uncultured bhikkhu is assured of requisites and honour<sup>53</sup> (the bluster may be, for example: ‘The Abhidhamma is all scholastic concepts! Not The Buddha’s Word! Quite unnecessary to study! Not true Buddhist culture!’)<sup>54</sup>

☠ The fourth future danger is the uncultured bhikkhus who do not apply themselves to the suttas by The Buddha (**deep** (*gambhīrā*), **profound** (*gambhīratthā*), **transcendent** (*lokuttarā*), **connected with the Void** (*suññatā-ppaṭi-saṃyuttā*)). Instead, they apply themselves to digressive poetry, rhetoric, alien teachings (they may say, for example: The Pali Texts are boring! Tiresome and repetitive! Quite unnecessary to study!’). They do not study the Pali Texts, but other texts, maybe Buddhist songs and poetry, philological and historical analyses of Buddhist culture, maybe modern science, philosophy, psychology, etc., and other alien cultures. The result of such conduct is that they no longer know the difference between what is Dhamma and what is not Dhamma: worldly things are discussed as if they were Dhamma, and prattle becomes the order of the day, under the guise of ‘Dhamma discussion’.

☠ The fifth future danger is the uncultured bhikkhus who neglect the duties of seclusion (*pa-viveke*), and do not make effort to progress towards any paths or fruitions. Instead, they may culture the duties of monastic rules&rites and monastic requisites. Then is there maybe instead effort only towards chanting, sprinkling holy water, etc. (the mantra might be something like **serving the people, out of compassion for the world**), and effort with regard to the **work** of building, cleaning, and maintaining the monastery: indeed, the uncultured bhikkhu may claim such effort constitutes Right Effort, and that it leads Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration: Right Buddhist Culture. The work of studying the profound Dhamma, of clean-

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where, may get sick or die. In all cases, the new bhikkhu must find another teacher, who must be possessed of certain qualifications.

<sup>53</sup> Please see the Commentary to this sutta.

<sup>54</sup> The Buddha made it an offence against the Vinaya for a bhikkhu to disparage the Vinaya or the Dhamma to another bhikkhu or a layperson: for example, if he says certain Pali Texts should not be studied. (Vin.Pāc.viii.2) To disparage The Buddha, Dhamma, or Sangha in this way can even become the ground for the Sangha to carry out a formal act of censure (*tajjanīya kamma*) (Cv.I.4), or a formal act of banishment (*pabbājanīya kamma*) (Cv.I.14) And The Buddha allows householders to express displeasure at a bhikkhu who does so. (A.VIII.ix.8 ‘*Appasāda-Pavedanīya-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Displeasure Expression Sutta’)) To find fault with the Dhamma in this way is also one of the five ways in which a bhikkhu can impossibly enter upon the right way (‘*Tatiya-Sammatta-Niyāma-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Third Right-Way Sutta’)), and it is one of the seven things that lead to a lay-disciple’s decline (A.VII.iii.9 ‘*Dutiya-Parihāni-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Second Decline Sutta’)).

ing the mind, and of developing and maintaining the jhānas is then not on the agenda. The Buddha explains that then do the followers of such uncultured bhikkhus develop wrong views, and therefore follow suit (they may say that owing to modern culture, it is impossible in this day and age to culture Vinaya, impossible to culture jhāna, and impossible to progress to Nibbāna), and in this case, Buddhist culture has become undone.<sup>55</sup> When the progressive culture towards Nibbāna is gone, Buddhist culture is no more, for then have the Four Noble Truths been reduced to only two: then are there left only suffering and the origin of suffering. That is the state of affairs when progressive Buddhist culture becomes only a myth, and our culture becomes aimed at rebirth in the next Buddha's Dispensation, as if the present dispensation did not exist.

That is how wrong our view can become. The Buddha explains:

**Thus indeed, bhikkhus, with corrupt Dhamma, there is corrupt Vinaya; with corrupt Vinaya, there is corrupt Dhamma.**

**These, bhikkhus, are the five future dangers, unarisen at present, that will arise in the future. Be alert to this, and being alert, make effort to get rid of them.**

A further five future dangers The Buddha explains as when bhikkhus no longer dwell in seclusion, but get actively involved with society.<sup>56</sup> He explains that they do this because they want

- ☠ firstly fine robes,
  - ☠ secondly fine food (they no longer go for *piṇḍapāta*), and
  - ☠ thirdly fine lodgings: owing to these desires, explains The Buddha, they do many improper things.
  - ☠ Fourthly, explains The Buddha, bhikkhus will **live in close society with bhikkhunis, female probationers and female novices**. Maybe owing to modern dogmas about equality between the sexes, they may view segregation culture as undemocratic, sexist<sup>57</sup> culture (**Men and women are equal! Monks and nuns are, of course, also equal! And novices too! And laypeople!**).<sup>58</sup>
- The Buddha explains what then may happen:

**As they associate with nuns, female probationers, and female novices, it may be expected that they either lead the holy life dissatisfied, or fall into one of the bad of-**

<sup>55</sup> The Buddha explains to the Venerable Ānanda regarding practice of the Noble Eightfold Path leading to Nibbāna: 'I say to you. Ānanda: continue this good practice instituted by Me, and do not be the last man.' And the Commentary explains: 'The good practice is being broken by a virtuous bhikkhu when he thinks: 'I cannot attain arahantship', and does not exert energy. It has been broken by a corrupt bhikkhu. It is being continued by the seven *sekhas* [learners, who have attained the Noble State, but not arahantship]. It has been continued by the arahant.' (M.II.iv.3 '*Makhādeva-Suttaṃ*' (Makhādeva is the name of a king.)

<sup>56</sup> A.V.ii.10 '*Catuttha Anāgata-Bhaya-Suttaṃ*' ('Fourth Future Danger Sutta')

<sup>57</sup> SEXIST: If you describe people or their behaviour as sexist, you mean that they are influenced by the belief that the members of one sex, usually women, are less intelligent or less capable than those of the other sex and need not be treated equally. ☐ Old-fashioned sexist attitudes are still common... I think the whole thing is very unfair and if I may say so I think it's very sexist... I am not being sexist. (CCED)

<sup>58</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of the equality conceit, please see S.III.I.v.7 '*Soṇa-Suttaṃ*' ('Soṇa Sutta'), and S.IV.I.iii.i.5 '*Seyyoham-asmi-Suttaṃ*' ('Superior Am I Sutta')

**fences, or give up the training, and return to the lower life** (*hīnāyā-vatti-ssanti*).

With such culture, bhikkhus and women under training may live in close proximity, eat together in the same refectory, undertake monastic procedures together, travel together, study together, and teach together. Then may they progress to improper culture of body, speech and mind together, disrobe together, and then undertake matrimonial culture together: ignoble culture (continued ageing, sickness and death) became the end of their Buddhist culture.<sup>59</sup>

☠ Fifthly, explains The Buddha, bhikkhus will **live in close society with monastery attendants and novices**. They store up all kinds of possessions, and become owners of land and property, and with business culture run their monasteries.

As we can see, the progressive undoing of Buddhist culture is inevitably the progressive undoing of the miracle of instruction. From having a miracle, we have **Buddhist** instruction that is an obstacle, a most grievous obstacle, to the instructor and the instructed, for it no longer leads to Nibbāna. The Buddha explains that in such a case, even though the instructor be a bhikkhu of long standing, with a great following of householders and bhikkhus, even he receive many requisites, and be skilful in explaining the Dhamma, and understand the Dhamma very well in theory, he has wrong view, and:<sup>60</sup>

**He turns away many people from the True Dhamma** (*Sa-Ddhamma*), **and establishes them in what is the untrue dhamma** (*a-saddhamme*).

Such instruction is what The Buddha describes as:

**to many people's unhappiness** (*bahu-jana a-sukhāya*), **to many people's ill** (*bahunā janassa anattāya*), **to the harm** (*a-hitāya*), **and suffering of devas and men** (*dukkhāya deva-manussānaṃ*).

On one occasion, in detail, and very clearly, The Buddha explained the difference between such a 'society bhikkhu', as opposed to the bhikkhu in seclusion. The Buddha had at that time taken up residence in a village called Icchānaṅgala, and His assistant was not yet the wise Venerable Ānanda, but a Venerable Nāgita.<sup>61</sup> When the people of the village heard that The Buddha had arrived, they flocked to His dwelling with offerings for Him and the Sangha, making much noise. The Venerable Nāgita asked the Buddha please to accept their offerings, so that the people would be inclined to give. But The Buddha's words were quite opposed to this idea. He said:

**I, Nāgita, with honour have no truck** (*m-Āhaṃ, nāgita, yasena samā-gamaṃ*),<sup>62</sup> **nor with Me does honour** (*mā ca Mayā yaso*).

**Whoever cannot obtain at will, easily, and without difficulty this happiness of renunciation** (*nekkhamma-sukhassa*), **this happiness of seclusion** (*paviveka-sukhassa*), **this happiness of calm** (*upasa-*

<sup>59</sup> **IGNOBLE SEARCH**: please see above footnote 40, p.205.

<sup>60</sup> A.V.II.iv.8 '*Thera-Suttaṃ*' ('Elder Sutta')

<sup>61</sup> A.VIII.II.iv.6 '*Yasa-Suttaṃ*' ('Honour Sutta')

<sup>62</sup> **HAVE NO TRUCK WITH**: 'to have nothing to do with [CTCD]'; 'avoid dealing with [POD]'; 'If you say that you will have no truck with someone or something, you are refusing to be involved with them in any way. ☐ He would have no truck with deceit [CCED].'

*ma-sukhassa*), this happiness of enlightenment (*sambodha-sukhassa*),<sup>63</sup> which I can obtain at will, easily, and without difficulty, let him enjoy that dungy<sup>64</sup> happiness (*mīlha-sukham*), that slothful happiness (*middha-sukham*), that happiness of gain, homage and fame (*lābha-sakkāra-siloka-sukham*).

The happiness The Buddha is here speaking of is on the one hand the happiness of renunciation (*nekkhamma*), on the other hand the happiness of sensuality (*kāma*); the happiness of the bhikkhu and the happiness of the layman; pure happiness born of non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion, and impure, dungy happiness born of greed, hatred and delusion.

To the Venerable Nāgita, The Buddha then explained His thoughts about the bhikkhu who resides in the village (*gāmanta-vihāriṃ*), with mind collected (*samāhitam*), who is meditating in a village monastery:

**I am, Nāgita, with that bhikkhu not pleased about his village abiding.**

*Āhaṃ, Nāgita, tassa bhikkhuno na attamano homi gāmanta-vihārena.*

Why was The Buddha not pleased with the bhikkhu who meditates in the midst of society? He explained that sooner or later someone will disturb that bhikkhu's concentration: perhaps for him to receive offerings, to teach, or (in the modern day) to engage in some other so-called **religious activity**: he will never progress in Buddhist culture.

Having explained His thoughts about the bhikkhu who meditates in the village, The Buddha then explained His thoughts about the bhikkhu in the forest (*āraññikaṃ*) who is dozing (*pacalāya-mānaṃ*):

**I am, Nāgita, with that bhikkhu pleased about his forest abiding.**

*Āhaṃ, Nāgita, tassa bhikkhuno attamano homi arañña-vihārena.*

The Buddha was displeased with the bhikkhu in society who is meditating, and pleased with the bhikkhu removed from society who is dozing. Why is this? Because sooner or later the dozing bhikkhu in the forest will dispel his sloth and weariness (*niddā-kilamathaṃ*), and with the forest-perception (*arañña-saññāmyeva*) make the mind one (*manasi karissati ekatta*): he will progress towards concentration of mind, he will progress in Buddhist culture.

This means that being involved with society is opposed to gaining the fruits of progressive Buddhist culture: Samatha, Vipassanā, and Nibbāna. Says who? Says The Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, in no uncertain terms.

The Buddha explained also that He was pleased (*attamano*) with the bhikkhu in the forest whose mind is scattered (*a-samāhitam*), because sooner or later that bhikkhu will collect his mind. And finally The Buddha explained that he was pleased (*attamano*) with the bhikkhu in the forest whose mind is collected (*samāhitam*), because sooner or later that bhikkhu's mind will be liberated (*vimuttam*).

Thus, The Buddha was displeased (*na attamano*) with the bhikkhu in society who is concentrated, and He was pleased (*attamano*) with the bhikkhu in the forest who

<sup>63</sup> The commentary explains: happiness of renunciation (*nekkhamma-sukham*) <jhāna = renunciation of sensual pleasure>, the happiness of seclusion (*paviveka-sukham*) <jhāna = seclusion from the crowd/defilements> the happiness of peace (*upasama-sukham*) <jhāna = quieting of defilements>, the happiness of enlightenment (*sambodhi-sukham*) <jhāna = for the purpose of enlightenment>.

<sup>64</sup> DUNG: excrement: manure... DUNGY (CTCD)

is dozing and unconcentrated, and the one who is concentrated. Here too, The Buddha makes it perfectly clear that society is not the place for a bhikkhu to be of any use either to himself or the world: solitude in the forest is.

Just in case we should stubbornly insist that even the Perfectly Enlightened Buddha Himself was wrong (what, with democracy, human rights and equality, etc.), we can take also the summary He gave to the Venerable Nāgita:<sup>65</sup>

Here, Nāgita, a bhikkhu I see, residing in a village, getting the robe-, alms-, dwelling-, [and] medicine-for-sickness requisites.

He the gain, homage and fame enjoys, and neglects going into retreat, neglects the forest wilderness, and secluded dwellings; he lives having resorted to village, town and chief capital. Hence, Nāgita, I am with that bhikkhu not pleased about his abiding.

Can The Buddha's instruction be any clearer?

He, the One who is **Arahant, Perfectly Enlightened, Possessed of Knowledge and Conduct, Accomplished, Knower of worlds, Unsurpassable Trainer of men, Teacher of devas and human beings, Enlightened, Blessed**, says:

Come! This is the way, this the practice, which I have practised and realized with true knowledge, and by which I make known the unsurpassable of the holy life.

Come you too! Practise so that you too may have practised and realized with true knowledge the unsurpassable of the holy life, and abide therein.

The way and practice instructed by The Buddha, so that bhikkhus may progress towards realizing with true knowledge the unsurpassable of the holy life, is not to seek out society, not to go into society (out of compassion for suffering mankind), for that is nothing less than wrong view (of immeasurable danger to suffering mankind), the sensualist's fear of solitude, his fear of being alone without his dungy pleasures.

The way and practice instructed by The Buddha is for the bhikkhu to go out of society. Hence, The Buddha explains:

Here, Nāgita, a bhikkhu I see in the forest, getting the robe-, alms-, dwelling-, and medicine-for-sickness requisites.

He the gain, homage and fame having checked, does not neglect going into retreat, does not neglect the forest wilderness, and secluded dwellings.

Hence, Nāgita, I am with that bhikkhu pleased about his abiding.

The bhikkhu who wishes to follow The Buddha's instruction needs to shun all society, not only outside the monastery, but inside the monastery too. Having said that, we need to distinguish: discussing the True Dhamma in a sober and serious manner with other bhikkhus does not come under 'society', but anything else does. The Buddha explains:<sup>66</sup>

Indeed, when you Nāgita, having assembled (*sariggamma*), having come together (*samāgama*), abide devoted to enjoying each other's company (*sariga-ṇika-vihāraṃ anuyuttā viharanti*), I think:

'Surely, these venerable ones cannot obtain at will, easily, and without difficulty, this happiness of renunciation, this happiness of seclusion, this happiness of calm, this happiness of enlightenment....

That is why these venerable ones are assembled, have come together, and abide enjoying each other's company.

<sup>65</sup> A.VI.iv.12 'Nāgita-Suttaṃ' (Nāgita is the bhikkhu to whom The Buddha speaks.)

<sup>66</sup> A.VIII.II.iv.6 'Yasa-Suttaṃ' ('Honour Sutta')

This is not very difficult to understand, is it? If a bhikkhu is devoted to progressive Buddhist culture (the threefold higher training), and enjoys the fruits thereof, he will inevitably be averse to company. It goes without saying. Contrariwise, the bhikkhu who enjoys society with other bhikkhus will inevitably not be one who enjoys the fruits of progressive Buddhist culture: his fruits are the fruits of society, progressive sensualist culture.

Hence, The Buddha gives the same analysis of bhikkhus who enjoy **joking** (*sañjagghante*), and **playing** (*sañkīlante*) with each other, and who take a big meal, and then a long rest: The Buddha knows that such bhikkhus are not enjoying the fruits of progressive Buddhist culture. They have not progressed, and cannot progress towards the higher morality, the higher mind, or the higher wisdom.

The Buddha explained this also once, when the Venerable Ānanda and many other bhikkhus had come together to make robes. Seeing that there was too much a sense of ‘We are Sangha’, so to speak, The Buddha gave instruction:<sup>67</sup>

**Ānanda, a bhikkhu does not shine by enjoying society, by finding enjoyment in society, by devoting himself to enjoyment in society.**

And He explained that it is impossible for such a bhikkhu to culture Samatha, Vipassanā, and progress to Nibbāna. Then, explained the Buddha, is there the undoing of one who leads the holy life.

And He continued:

**Therefore, Ānanda, behave towards me as a friend, not as an enemy. That will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time.**

**And how do disciples behave towards the Teacher as enemies, not as friends?**

**Here, Ānanda, compassionate and seeking their welfare, the Teacher teaches the Dhamma to the disciples out of compassion: ‘This is to your welfare, this is to your happiness.’**

**His disciples do not want to hear, or give ear, or exert their minds to understand: they err and turn away from the Teacher’s Teaching.**

This is when disciples (bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen) try to devise a cross-cultural Buddhism: to adulterate Buddhist culture with alien cultures, maybe their own private culture.

**And how do disciples behave towards the Teacher as friends, not as enemies?**

**Here, Ānanda, compassionate and seeking their welfare, the Teacher teaches the Dhamma to the disciples out of compassion: ‘This is to your welfare, this is to your happiness.’**

**His disciples want to hear, and give ear, and exert their minds to understand; they do not err and turn aside from the Teacher’s Teaching.**

This is when disciples (bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen) try to honour the miracle of instruction, and preserve it. That is progressive Buddhist culture. Do you want to be friends with The Buddha? Do you want progressive Buddhist culture?

Then please recollect the time when The Buddha went to see three bhikkhus who were living secluded in the forest.<sup>68</sup> He asked them about their lifestyle, and was told how they went for alms every day, and spent the rest of every day in solitude and silence, striving in meditation: every five days, they would meet

<sup>67</sup> M.III.iii.2 ‘*Mahā-Suññata-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Great Voidness Sutta’)

<sup>68</sup> M.I.iv.1 ‘*Cūḷa-Gosiṅga-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Small Gosinga Sutta’: Gosinga is the wood where those three bhikkhus were dwelling.)

and discuss Dhamma. Pursuing this lifestyle, they now possessed all the jhānas and had attained arahantship. Yet they remained secluded in the forest, abiding in meditation.

The sutta continues:

Then, when the Blessed One had instructed, urged, roused, and encouraged the Venerable Anuruddha, the Venerable Nandiya, and the Venerable Kimbila with a talk on the Dhamma, He rose from His seat and departed.

Did The Buddha scold them for selfishly having stayed in the forest, intent on their own salvation? Did He instruct, urge, rouse, and encourage them to go out into society to teach? Let us see. The sutta continues:

Then the spirit Dīgha Parajana went to the Blessed One. After doing obeisance to the Blessed One, he stood at one side and said:

‘It is a gain for the Vajjians, Venerable Sir, a great gain for the Vajjian people that the Tathāgata, accomplished and perfectly enlightened, dwells among them, and these three clansmen: the Venerable Anuruddha, the Venerable Nandiya, the Venerable Kimbila!’

Then what happened? Did someone say: What do you mean? What good are those three selfish clansmen?

Let us see. The sutta continues:

On hearing the exclamation of the spirit Dīgha Parajana, the earth devas... the devas of the heaven of the Four Great Kings... the devas of the heaven of the Thirty-three... the Yāma devas... the Tusita heaven devas... the devas Who Delight in Creating... the devas Who Wield Power over Others’ Creations... the devas of Brahmā’s Retinue exclaimed: ‘It is a gain for the Vajjians, Venerable Sir, a great gain for the Vajjian people that the Tathāgata, accomplished and perfectly enlightened, dwells among them, and these three clansmen: the Venerable Anuruddha, the Venerable Nandiya, the Venerable Kimbila!’

Thus, at that instant, at that moment, those venerable ones were known as far as the Brahmā-world.

Then again, maybe all those devas were wrong: what do devas know?

Let us then see what The Buddha’s verdict was:

So it is Dīgha! So it is! And if the clan from which those three clansmen went forth from the home life into homelessness should remember them with confident heart, that would lead to the welfare and happiness of that clan for a long time.

And if the retinue of the clan... if the village... if the town... if the city... if the country from which those three clansmen went forth from the home life into homelessness should remember them with confident heart, that would lead to the welfare and happiness of that clan... village... town... city... country for a long time.

If all nobles... all Brahmins... all merchants... all workers should remember those three clansmen with confident heart, that would lead to the welfare and happiness of the nobles... Brahmins... merchants... workers for a long time.

The Buddha continued:

If the world with its devas, its Māras, and its Brahmās, this generation with its ascetics and Brahmins, its princes and people, should remember those three clansmen with confident heart, that would lead to the welfare and happiness of the world for a long time.

See, Dīgha, how those three clansmen are practising for the blessing of the many folk, for the happiness of the many folk, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the blessing, the happiness of devas and men.

And the sutta concludes:

That is what the Blessed One said (*Idamavoca Bhagavā*).

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Thank you.





Today's talk is the last of seven on the Third Noble Truth: the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodham Ariya-Saccam*), which is Nibbāna. We shall also today discuss the arahant.

Let us begin by looking at the case of the Venerable Adhimutta: he became an arahant while still only a novice.<sup>1</sup> Then, when he turned twenty, he decided to become a bhikkhu, and went home to get permission from his mother. But on the way, he was kidnapped by a large gang of bandits, who told him they were going to sacrifice him to their god: Adhimutta did not bat an eyelid. The chief bandit was amazed, and said that of all the people he had sacrificed, not one had failed to evince absolute terror, yet the Venerable Adhimutta's face was if anything brighter than ever. The Venerable Adhimutta explained to the bandits that one such as he was glad, not sorry, when the **term of lives is reached... as one who from the slaughterhouse escapes.**

And he told them they could do what they wanted with his body, not for that reason would hatred arise in him. Thrilled by his conduct, the bandits laid down their weapons; all decided to give up banditry, and some followed the Venerable Adhimutta to become bhikkhus.

We run from birth to birth, and from death to death, thinking it is all so very beautiful and exciting. Yet, a young man who has attained to what The Buddha calls the **Supreme Noble Wisdom** (*Paramā Ariyā Paññā*)<sup>2</sup> compares it to a slaughterhouse. How is this?

The Buddha explained it once to a group of bhikkhus:<sup>3</sup>

**For a long time, bhikkhus, have you been cattle, and when as cattle you were decapitated, the stream of blood that you shed is greater than the waters in the four great oceans.**

**For a long time have you been buffalo, sheep, goats, deer, chickens and pigs, and when you were decapitated, the stream of blood that you shed is greater than the waters in the four great oceans.**

We never think of this, do we? Take ~~modern~~ industrial farming: cattle, pigs and chickens are under unspeakable conditions fattened for slaughter with any manner of industrial fodder (fit for neither bird nor beast). They are crushed together in transport, and in a reek of blood, in abject terror, they void urine and excrement, as they shrieking and screaming go to their gruesome death. As we see, hear or imagine their ill-fated life and death, we can with wisdom reflect: 'I have also met such a fate: countless times.'

We can reflect further: 'Those cattle, pigs, and chickens have met such a fate before: countless times.' And: 'The farmers and butchers have themselves met such a fate before: countless times.' 'The farmers and butchers have been such farmers and butchers before: countless times.' 'The cattle, pigs and chickens have themselves been such farmers and butchers: countless times.' And lastly, if we dare, we may also reflect: 'I have myself been such a farmer and butcher: countless times.' The same with fishermen and the fish they kill, and women and men and the insects, rats and other beings they kill in house, garden and

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<sup>1</sup> Thag.xvi 'Adhimutta' (Adhimutta is the name of the arahant.)

<sup>2</sup> M.III.iv.10 'Dhātu-Vibhaṅga-Suttam' ('Elements Analysis Sutta')

<sup>3</sup> S.II.IV.ii.3 'Timsa-Matta-Suttam' ('Thirty Bhikkhus')

field, etc.

Whenever we see evil perpetrated, towards others or ourselves, we know we have ourselves done it: countless times. When we read about murderers, thieves, bandits, rapists, terrorists, liars, drunkards, lunatics, etc. we can reflect: ‘I have been such a person: countless times,’ The Buddha explained to the bhikkhus:

**For a long time have you been arrested as burglars, highwaymen, and adulterers, and when you were beheaded, the stream of blood that you shed is greater than the waters in the four great oceans. Why is that? Because inconceivable, bhikkhus, is the beginning of this *saṃsāra*. A first point is not known of beings rushing on and running about (hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving).**

Evil is perpetrated owing to sensuality, the arising of sensations. The Buddha explains:<sup>4</sup>

**Dependent on the eye and sights, there arises eye consciousness: with the meeting of the three, there is contact. With contact as condition there arises [a sensation] felt as pleasant or painful or neither painful nor pleasant.**

This is sensation born of eye contact. There is also sensation born of ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind contact.<sup>5</sup> But it is not sensation alone that gives rise to evil. Sensation is the condition for craving, and that gives rise to delight in pleasant sensation, and aversion for unpleasant sensation.

The Buddha explains:

- [1] **When one is touched by a pleasant sensation, if one delights in it, welcomes it, and remains holding on to it, then the latency of lust (*rāg-ānusayo*) lies within one.**
- [2] **When one is touched by a painful sensation, if one sorrows, grieves and laments, weeps beating one’s breast and becomes distraught, then the latency of aversion (*paṭigh-ānusayo*) lies within one.**
- [3] **When one is touched by a neither-painful-nor-pleasant sensation, if one does not understand as it actually is the origination, the disappearance, the gratification, the danger, and the escape in regard to that sensation, then the latency of ignorance (*avijj-ānusayo*) lies within one.<sup>6</sup>**

The latencies of lust, aversion and ignorance are three of the seven latencies (*anusayā*) that we possess so long as we are not enlightened.<sup>7</sup>

The Buddha explains:<sup>8</sup>

**Bhikkhus, there are these seven latencies. What seven?**

**The latency for sensual lust (*kāma-rāg-ānusayo*), the latency of aversion (*paṭigh-ānusayo*), the latency of views (*ditṭh-ānusayo*), the latency of doubt (*vicikicch-ānusayo*), the latency of conceit (*mān-ānusayo*), the latency of lust for existence (*bhava-rāg-ānusayo*), the latency of ignorance (*avijj-ānusayo*).**

Our latencies constitute our fundamental character, so to speak, our deep-seated ‘*saṃsāra* nature’; they keep us anchored in the waters of *saṃsāra*. When

<sup>4</sup> M.III.v.6 ‘*Cha-Chakka-Suttam*’ (‘Six Sixes Sutta’)

<sup>5</sup> CONTACT: please see also The Buddha’s explanation above, p.143, and table above, p.179.

<sup>6</sup> This corresponds to The Buddha’s above explanation of the fool, p.173.

<sup>7</sup> LATENT: ‘concealed, dormant, existing but not developed or manifest LATENCY [POD]’ LATENCY: ‘Latent condition, nature, or existence; *spec.* in Biology, that of a disposition or faculty which remains concealed until the necessary conditions for its development are supplied. [SOED]’

<sup>8</sup> A.VII.ii.1 ‘*Paṭhama Anusaya-Suttam*’ (‘First Latency Sutta’)

the conditions are right, our latencies become full-blown manifestations of lust, hatred and delusion.

Take, for example, our beloved son and daughter. Owing to our latency of lust, we delight in seeing, hearing and touching them: owing to our latency of conceit and ignorance, we think: 'They are MINE, they are ME, and they are MY SELF.' Then, one day the phone rings, and it is the police to tell us our children were run over by a drunken woman in her big Mercedes.<sup>9</sup> This gives rise to unpleasant sensation. Do we then with wisdom reflect: 'All formations are impermanent, all formations are suffering, all things are non-self.'? No, not very likely. Now the conditions are right for our latency of aversion, conceit and ignorance to give rise to hatred, and we grieve, lament, and get distraught. But that is not enough. Our aversion will manifest also as hatred for the woman in her Mercedes. She too grieves and laments and is distraught, but our latency of conceit makes us unforgiving: 'Those were MY children!' And one cannot know what we then may do. Whatever it is, whenever we think of our departed children, or the woman in her Mercedes, we will cultivate hatred, and that may go with us right to our death. Then where do you think we will be reborn?

Such a series of events leading up to full blown hatred is nothing unusual. Please read the newspapers, and see what people do when someone has hurt one of their loved ones, or indeed, when they have themselves been hurt: it happens even in the school playground, and among animals.

Imagine then that we are president, and think: 'I am the father of MY nation, the most beautiful nation in the world; MY people are good peaceloving people like me.' Then a small group of allegedly foreign terrorists kill hundreds, maybe thousands of people, and owing to everyone's latency of aversion, views, conceit and ignorance, the conditions are right for the good peaceloving people to become bad warloving people, themselves to exercise terrorism upon other people: this is national conceit, known as nationalism. If we go back through the annals of history, even of yesterday, we see the evil that national conceit can lead to, on a personal, local, national and international level.<sup>10</sup>

Wars are perpetrated always owing to the latency of lust, aversion, conceit and ignorance: we covet someone else's land, resources, etc., or we blame someone else for our present troubles, grudge them their power and wealth, hate their politics, religion, etc. These latencies are nurtured already at childhood, in school, on the playing fields, and are satiated in front of the box: the Olympics, and all the world cups, etc. are body culture as a celebration of national conceit, and much is the crime committed all round, and many the tears shed by the losers.

The latency of sensual lust is prime mover in all conflict. The Buddha explains:<sup>11</sup>

**With sensuality as the cause, sensuality as the source, sensuality as the basis, kings quarrel with**

<sup>9</sup> A member of the author's audience had some time earlier on his motorbike been knocked over by a woman in her big car.

<sup>10</sup> Here, the author mentioned that when Hitler was democratically elected to power it was as the leader of the National-socialist Party (Nationalsozialist = Nazi).

<sup>11</sup> M.I.ii.3 '*Mahā-Dukkha-Kkhandha-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Sutta on the Mass of Suffering')

kings, noblemen with noblemen, Brahmins with Brahmins, householders with householders; mother quarrels with child, child with mother, father with child, child with father; brother quarrels with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, friend with friend.

And here in their quarrels, brawls and disputes, they attack each other with fists, stones, sticks or knives, and they incur death or deadly suffering....

Are modern conditions any different? Now it is presidents (some democratically elected) who quarrel with presidents, democratically elected members of parliament quarrel with democratically elected members of parliament, priests with priests, and everything else is the same, if not worse: according to police reports, the violence of body and speech in society and home increases all the time.

The Buddha continues:

**With sensuality as the cause, sensuality as the source, sensuality as the basis, men take swords and shields and buckle on bows and quivers, and they charge into battle ... charge slippery bastions, with arrows and spears flying and swords flashing; and there they are wounded by arrows and spears and splashed with boiling liquids and crushed under heavy weights, and their heads are cut off with swords, and they incur death or deadly suffering....**

Here too, it is the same and worse. Women and men take automatic weapons, tanks, aeroplanes with bombs and missiles, ships and submarines with shells and missiles, and terrorize, mutilate and kill men, women and children, and destroy roads, buildings, bridges, dams, power stations, and other property, and are themselves mutilated and killed. The cause is sensuality, which explains why it is the sensually most developed countries that have the most powerful armed forces. It is also they who have developed nuclear, chemical and biological weapons for mass destruction, and keep on developing them.

The Buddha continues:

**With sensuality as the cause, sensuality as the source, sensuality as the basis, men break into houses, plunder wealth, commit burglary, ambush highways, seduce the wives of others, and when they are caught, kings have many kinds of torture inflicted on them.... and ... have their heads cut off with swords, and they incur death or deadly suffering.**

Here too, things are the same and worse. Modern punishment of criminals is usually to reduce their sensual pleasures by imprisonment. Even so, there are still modern societies that punish their criminals, and execute them by hanging, the gruesome electric chair,<sup>12</sup> and poison administered by a doctor. Modern lifestyle, however, is punishing enough: self-hanging is increasingly common; more and more dangerous is the radiation from electrical technology; and poison is administered liberally by the industries, including those that provide our food and drink. Furthermore, in what the world considers to be the most civilized cities, murders and rapes, etc. are perpetrated every so-many seconds, every day, all year round: the freedom of modern progressive society includes freedom to have one's property burgled and vandalized, and for oneself to be robbed, mugged, beaten up, kidnapped, tortured, raped, decapitated, shot, etc. even in broad daylight, by louts, thugs, hooligans, gangsters, the police, se-

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<sup>12</sup> ELECTRIC CHAIR: The electric chair is a method of killing criminals, used especially in the United States, in which a person is strapped to a special chair and killed by a powerful electric current. (CCED) (It sometimes takes a number of jolts, however, before the victim actually dies.)

rial killers and other lunatics, even by schoolchildren.

Thus, as we look back through history, and at the world today, we see Man forever perpetrating evil upon Man, and upon other beings. The Buddha explains:<sup>13</sup>

**...inconceivable is the beginning of this *saṃsāra*. A first point is not known of spear wounds, sword wounds, arrow wounds, axe wounds.**

Then may we object to The Buddha's analyses of Man: 'This is an unnecessarily dark view of Man! Fundamentally, Man is good!' Is that what The Buddha says? Does He give an eighth latency? Maybe a latency of the Supreme Noble Wisdom? Let us see.

Very often, The Buddha put a pinch of soil onto his fingernail, and asked the bhikkhus to compare it to the earth, and then He would use the inequality between the trifling bit of soil on His nail, and the earth as a simile for a particular aspect of Man's inequality. In one case, with a little bit of soil on His fingernail, He asked:<sup>14</sup>

**What do you think, bhikkhus, which is more: the little bit of soil on my fingernail or the great earth?** (Bhante, the great earth is more.... Compared to the great earth the little bit of soil that the Blessed One has taken up onto His fingernail is incalculable, does not bear comparison, does not amount even to a fraction.)

**So too, bhikkhus, trifling are the beings who possess the noble eye of wisdom (*paññā-cakkhunā*). But more are the beings who are possessed of ignorance (*avijjā-gatā*), and are confused (*sa-mmulhā*)....**

According to the Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, our latency is for ignorance and confusion, not enlightenment. He explains further unenlightening latencies:

- ... more are the beings who do not abstain from wine, liquor, and besotting drink....
- ...who do not abstain from killing....
- ...who do not abstain from venereal misconduct....
- ...who do not abstain from lies....
- ...who do not abstain from slander....
- ...who do not abstain from abuse....
- ...who do not abstain from prattle....
- ...who do not abstain from bribery,
- ...who do not abstain from deception,
- ...who do not abstain from fraud....
- ...who do not abstain from mutilation,
- who do not abstain from murder,
- who do not abstain from binding,
- who do not abstain from robbery,
- who do not abstain from plunder,
- who do not abstain from violence.

The Buddha is speaking from the perspective of ancient India, and the past aeons He examined with His divine eye. Have things changed? Is there a grow-

<sup>13</sup> S.V.XII.iv.5 '*Satti-Sata-Suttaṃ*' ('A Hundred Spears Sutta')

<sup>14</sup> S.V.XII.vii.3 '*Paññā-Suttaṃ*' ('Wisdom Sutta'), 4 '*Surā-Meraya-Suttaṃ*' ('Wines&Liquor Sutta'); ibid.viii.1 '*Pāṇātipāta-Suttaṃ*' ('Killing Sutta'), 2 '*Adinnādāna-*' ('Theft-'), 3 '*Kāmesu-Micchācāra-*' ('Venereal Misconduct-'), 4 '*Musā-Vāda-*' ('False Speech-'), 5 '*Pesuñña-*' ('Slander-'), 6 '*Pharusavācā-*' ('Abuse-'), 7 '*Samphappalāpa-*' ('Prattle-'), x.5 '*Ukkoṭana-*' ('Bribery-'), 6-11 '*Chedan-Adi-Suttaṃ*' ('Mutilation, Etc. Sutta')

ing latency of conduct according to the True Dhamma (*Sa-Ddhamma*)? Does modern orthodoxy accord with the Dhamma? Is Dhamma reckoned with in the local, national and international forums? The United Nations? In modern education? On the Internet? Are there more and more people cultivating a latency of truthfulness, harmlessness, modesty, contentment, the five and eight precepts, and Samatha and Vipassanā? Any such suggestion is Mickey Mouse living in cloud-cuckoo-land. If we look into the past, and look into the present, and look into the future, *samsāra* is an endless running on of beings possessed of greed, hatred and delusion, and the further it is from the Golden Age of a Buddha, the worse it gets:<sup>15</sup> The Buddha's words ring and will always ring true, loud and clear.

Greed, hatred and delusion are the roots of all evil, all the unwholesome kamma (*akusala kamma*) that we do, have done, and will do, and their result. The Buddha explains:<sup>16</sup>

**Killing, I declare, bhikkhus, is of three kinds: rooted in greed (*lobha-hetukampi*), rooted in hatred (*dosa-hetukampi*), rooted in delusion (*moha-hetukampi*).**

**Theft... venereal misconduct... lies... slander... abuse... prattle... covetousness... ill-intention... wrong-view, I declare, bhikkhus, is of three kinds: rooted in greed, rooted in hatred, rooted in delusion.**

**Thus, bhikkhus,**

- [1] **greed is an origin of kamma-causation (*lobho kamma-nidāna-sambhavo*),**
- [2] **hatred is an origin of kamma-causation (*doso kamma-nidāna-sambhavo*),**
- [3] **delusion is an origin of kamma causation (*moho kamma-nidāna-sambhavo*).**

The formation of kamma determines our rebirth.<sup>17</sup>

Hence, The Buddha explains:<sup>18</sup>

**Not, bhikkhus,**

- [1] **of greed-born kamma (*lobha-jena kammena*),**
- [2] **of hatred-born kamma (*dosa-jena kammena*),**
- [3] **of delusion-born kamma (*moha-jena kammena*),**

**are devas known, are human beings known, and known any other happy existence.**

**On the contrary, of greed-born kamma, of hatred-born kamma, of delusion-born kamma, the hells are known, animal birth is known, the realm of ghosts is known, and known other kinds of unhappy existence.**

Since The Buddha explained that an infinitesimal<sup>19</sup> number of beings abstain from greed-, hatred- and delusion-born kamma, it follows that an unhappy rebirth is the fate of almost everyone. Again, with the trifling bit of soil on His

<sup>15</sup> The Buddha explains, for example: 'When beings are in decline and the True Dhamma is waning, then are there more precepts and fewer bhikkhus become arahants. There is no disappearance of the True Dhamma, Kassapa, till a counterfeit Dhamma appears in the world; but when a counterfeit Dhamma appears in the world, then is there a disappearance of the Dhamma.' (S.II.v.13 '*Sa-Ddhamma-Ppatirūpaka-Suttaṃ*' (Counterfeit of the True Dhamma Sutta')) And He explains: 'When beings are deteriorating and the True Dhamma is disappearing, then are there more training rules and fewer bhikkhus become established in final knowledge.' (M.II.ii.5 '*Bhad-dāli-Suttaṃ*' ('Bhaddāli Sutta'))

<sup>16</sup> A.X.IV.ii.8 '*Kamma-Nidāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Kamma Causation Sutta')

<sup>17</sup> Please see table above, p.179.

<sup>18</sup> A.VI.iv.9 '*Nidāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Causation Sutta')

<sup>19</sup> INFINITESIMAL: infinitely or very small (POD)

fingernail, The Buddha explains:<sup>20</sup>

**So too, bhikkhus, trifling are the beings who (when they pass away as human beings) are reborn as human beings.**

**But legion are the beings who (when they pass away as human beings) are reborn in hell... the animal realm... the ghost realm....**

And He explains also that, an infinitesimal number of human beings are reborn as devas, an infinitesimal number of devas are reborn as devas or human beings, and an infinitesimal number of beings in lower realms are reborn as devas or human beings.<sup>21</sup>

Practically everyone is reborn in the lower realms. And then what? The Buddha explains:<sup>22</sup>

**Suppose, bhikkhus, a man were to throw a yoke with a single hole into the great ocean, and there were a blind turtle that would come to the surface once every hundred years.**

**What do you think, bhikkhus, would that blind turtle (coming to the surface once every hundred years) stick its neck into that yoke with the single hole?**

(If it were to do so, Venerable Sir, it would be after only a very long time.)

**Sooner, do I declare, would that blind turtle (coming to the surface once every hundred years) stick its neck into that yoke with the single hole than the fool who has gone to the nether world [would regain] the human state.**

Here, The Buddha explains that once we have been reborn in one of the lower realms, it is well nigh impossible for us to be reborn again as a human being. And He explains:

**Why is that? Because here, bhikkhus, there is no conduct in accordance with the Dhamma (*Dhamma cariyā*), no righteous conduct (*sama cariyā*), no wholesome activity (*kusala kiriyā*), no meritorious activity (*puñña kiriyā*).**

**Here, there prevails mutual devouring, the devouring of the weaker.**

When we look at the human world, we see Man perpetrate dreadful violence of body, speech and mind on other human beings, and even more on non-human beings. If, however, we look at what we so fondly call 'beautiful Nature', we see violence of another order altogether. The animal world is a never-ending battle for life: that is why animals are always afraid. A simple example is the little house gekko that we find everywhere. It looks harmless enough, and to us it is harmless. But to weaker animals it is a monster. Never does the gekko rest from its search for someone to eat: alive. The average animal's life is a continuous stalking of a weaker animal, then pouncing, and then eating: the cat even tortures its victim. How then is an animal ever going to do good? When the animal dies, it has usually been killed by another animal or by the earth-, water-, fire-, or air element. That means it dies with fear: fear arises from the latency of aversion, hatred. If at death our mind is gripped by fear, we shall not have a happy rebirth. And much worse are the conditions in hell, and the ghost world. How can there ever be the condition for rebirth as a human being?

The human world is hardly better. As The Buddha explained, almost all hu-

<sup>20</sup> S.V.XII.xi.1 '*Manussa-Cuti-Niraya-Suttam*' ('Human-Passing-Away Hell Sutta'), -2 '*Tiracchāna-Suttam*' ('- Animal Sutta'), -3 '*Petti-Visaya-Suttam*' ('- Ghost Realm Sutta')

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*4-30

<sup>22</sup> S.V.XII.v.7 '*Paṭhama Chiggaḷa-Yuga-Suttam*' ('First Yoke with a Hole Sutta')



man beings kill and mutilate, steal, engage in venereal misconduct, and tell lies. Whenever that takes place, another being suffers.

When we are reborn in the deva worlds, we will usually not harm anyone directly (unless we are reborn as an evil deva). Nonetheless, we harm others indirectly, through engaging in inordinate enjoyment of deva-pleasures through our five deva-senses. Even had we made many offerings and diligently observed the precepts, it is very likely that under the very pleasurable conditions of life as a deva, we will forget the Dhamma. And there are in the deva world also occasionally wars with demons (*asura*). Finally, of course, our deva life will inevitably come to an end, and as The Buddha explained, then is it almost certain we shall be reborn in a nether world, again to live a life discordant with the Dhamma, with unrighteous conduct, unwholesome and unmeritorious activity. This has been going on forever.

The Buddha explains:<sup>23</sup>

**It is not easy, bhikkhus, to find a being who in this long course has not previously been your mother.... previously been your father.... previously been your brother.... previously been your sister.... previously been your son.... previously been your daughter.**

Thus, if we in our mind's eye look back into our beginningless rushing on and running about in *samsāra*, we see that it is not easy either to find a being whom we have not harmed by body or speech, even killed or terrorized, etc. Our personal history is a series of countless beings, and as those countless beings, we have harmed even more countless beings: we have experienced countless sufferings ourselves, and have perpetrated suffering upon countless other beings.

The Buddha explains:<sup>24</sup>

[1] **Inflamed, by lust overwhelmed** (*rāgena abhibhūto*)...

[2] **Infuriated, by hatred overwhelmed** (*dosena abhibhūto*)...

[3] **Confused, by delusion overwhelmed** (*mohena abhibhūto*),

**with mind gripped, one intends oneself harm** (*atta-byābādhāyapi ceteti*), **one intends another harm** (*para-byābādhāyapi ceteti*), **one intends both harm** (*ubhaya-byābādhāyapi ceteti*), **one experiences mental suffering and grief.**

This is the reality of human existence in the past, in the present and in the future.

The Buddha explains how our conduct affects countless beings from also another perspective, please listen carefully:<sup>25</sup>

**Five, bhikkhus, are these offerings** (*dānāni*), **great offerings** (*mahā-dānāni*), **originally known** (*agg-aññāni*), **long known** (*ratt-aññāni*), **traditionally known** (*vaṃsa-aññāni*), **ancient** (*porāṇāni*), **intact** (*a-saṃkiṇṇāni*), **intact in the past** (*a-saṃkiṇṇa-pubbāni*), **not dubious** (*na saṃkiyanti*), **will never be dubious** (*na saṃkiyissanti*), **unfaulted by wise ascetics and Brahmins** (*appaṭikuttṭhāni samaṇehi brāhmaṇehi viññūhi*).

**Which five?**

[1] **Here, bhikkhus, a noble disciple abandons killing, abstains from killing.**

**As he abstains from killing, he gives to countless beings safety** (*a-bhayaṃ deti*), **he gives friendli-**

<sup>23</sup> S.II.IV.ii.4 'Mātu-Suttaṃ' ('Mother Sutta'), 5 'Pitu-Suttaṃ' ('Father-'), 6 'Bhātu-Suttaṃ' ('Brother-'), 7 'Bhagini-Suttaṃ' ('Sister-'), 8 'Putta-Suttaṃ' ('Son-') 9 'Dhītu-Suttaṃ' ('Daughter Sutta')

<sup>24</sup> A.III.II.i.5 'Nibbuta-Suttaṃ' ('Extinguished Sutta')

<sup>25</sup> A.VIII.iv.9 'Abhisanda-Suttaṃ' ('Flow Sutta')

ness (*a-veraṃ deti*), he gives benevolence (*a-byābajjhaṃ deti*).<sup>26</sup>

- [2] ... As he abstains from theft, he gives to countless beings safety ...friendliness ...benevolence....  
 [3] ... As he abstains from venereal misconduct, he gives to countless beings safety friendliness ...benevolence....  
 [4] ... As he abstains from lies, he gives to countless beings safety ...friendliness ...benevolence....  
 [5] ... As he abstains from wine, liquor and besotting drink, he gives to countless beings safety ...friendliness ...benevolence.

Beautiful: when we keep the five precepts, we save countless beings.

What do you think? Does The Buddha mean that we save countless beings by once a week taking the five precepts, and within a day, if not within hours, or even minutes (owing to our latencies, and given the right conditions) again tell a lie, again kill, and again take intoxicants: again intend ourselves harm, another harm, and both harm? Hardly, for that would be Mickey Mouse living in cloud-cuckoo land. The Buddha said we **abandon** killing: do not do it again.

If we are to follow The Buddha's Teachings, the safety, friendliness and benevolence we give must remain constant. The Buddha explained it to a bhikkhu Phagguna.<sup>27</sup> The Venerable Phagguna would get angry and abusive if anyone criticized the bhikkhunis he associated with. For this conduct, The Buddha first reminded him that he was a bhikkhu, and second admonished him for undue association with the bhikkhunis. And third the Buddha told him that if someone should criticize the bhikkhunis, or strike them with a stone, stick or even a knife, he should abandon the household habit of getting upset: he should in all cases remain unaffected and practise loving-kindness (*mettā*).<sup>28</sup>

How many of us can do that? Towards one who harms us, or our children, our wife or husband, a good friend, our people?

Then The Buddha explained the case of the woman Vedehikā. She was renowned for being very gentle and peaceful. Once, her servant Kālī wanted to test her, and got up later and later for work. First her gentle, peaceful mistress scowled (hatred-born kamma of the mind), then she spoke unkind words (hatred-born kamma of speech), and finally she hit Kālī on the head with a rolling-pin so there was blood (hatred-born kamma of the body). This happens so long as the latency of aversion still lies within us: depending on conditions, we get upset, sad, angry, etc., and with that as condition do harm of body and speech. Our goodness, peacefulness and harmlessness are hostages to fortune.

Then The Buddha explained:

**So too, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is extremely kind, extremely gentle, extremely peaceful, so long as disagreeable courses of speech do not touch him.**

**But it is when disagreeable courses of speech touch him that it can be understood whether that bhikkhu is really kind, gentle, and peaceful.**

The Buddha explained also that so long as the bhikkhu gets his good food, his nice robes, his comfortable kuṭi, and the medicine he requires, he is cooperative. But it is when he does not get those things, that one may know

<sup>26</sup> SAFETY (lit. non-danger), FRIENDLINESS (lit. non-enmity), BENEVOLENCE (lit. non-malevolence)

<sup>27</sup> M.I.i3.1 'Kakac-Ūpama-Suttam' ('Saw Simile Sutta')

<sup>28</sup> The *Samyutta Nikāya* Commentary explains that this bhikkhu eventually disrobed. The reason for his doing so may be found above, p.210.

whether he is a true bhikkhu.

Then The Buddha explained in many ways how the bhikkhus should develop a mind of friendliness and benevolence, and ended with the much acclaimed simile of the saw:

**Even if, bhikkhus, bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handed saw, he who entertained a mind of hatred towards them would not be carrying out My Teaching.**

Is there anyone in the world who can carry out The Buddha's Teaching that way? Or if bandits savagely severed the limbs of a loved one? Yes, there is. In the beginning of this talk we mentioned the young novice Adhimutta. The bandits said they would sacrifice him to their god, and he did not bat an eyelid: if anything, his face shone. Why? He was devoid of the latency of aversion, sensual lust, views, doubt, conceit, lust for existence, and ignorance: he was an arahant.

The Buddha explains:<sup>29</sup>

**...with fear is the fool: without fear is the wise man; with distress is the fool: without distress is the wise man; with trouble is the fool: without trouble is the wise man.**

**Not for the wise man is there fear; not for the wise man is there distress; not for the wise man is there trouble.**

With arahantship:<sup>30</sup>

- 1) One will have fully understood enmity and fear: the First Noble Truth.
- 2) One will have fully eradicated the origin of enmity and fear: the Second Noble Truth.
- 3) One will have fully realized the cessation of enmity and fear: the Third Noble Truth.
- 4) One will have fully developed the way leading to the cessation of enmity and fear: the Fourth Noble Truth.

Then will one neither experience fear in oneself anymore, nor be the cause for someone else to experience fear: such is arahantship.<sup>31</sup>

The Buddha explains arahantship:<sup>32</sup>

**Dependent on the eye and sights, there arises eye consciousness: with the meeting of the three, there is contact.**

**With contact as condition there arises [a sensation] felt as pleasant or painful or neither painful nor pleasant.**

- [1] **When one is touched by a pleasant sensation, if one does not delight in it, does not welcome it, and does not remain holding on to it, then the latency of lust does not lie within one.**
- [2] **When one is touched by a painful sensation, if one does not sorrow, does not grieve and does not lament, does not weep beating one's breast and does not become distraught, then the latency of aversion does not lie within one.**
- [3] **When one is touched by a neither-painful-nor-pleasant sensation, if one understands as it actually is the origination, the disappearance, the gratification, the danger, and the escape in regard to that sensation, then the latency of ignorance does not lie within one.**

<sup>29</sup> M.III.ii.5 '*Bahu-Dhātuka-Suttaṃ*' ('Many Elements Sutta')

<sup>30</sup> These similes for the Four Noble Truths are given in Vis.xvi PoP.87.

<sup>31</sup> enmity and fear are eradicated already with the Path of non-return.

<sup>32</sup> M.III.v.6 '*Cha-Chakka-Suttaṃ*' ('Six Sixes Sutta')

The Buddha explains arahantship:<sup>33</sup>

...if lust, hatred, and delusion are given up, one does not intend oneself harm (*atta-byābādhāyapi ceteti*), one does not intend another harm (*para-byābādhāyapi ceteti*), one does not intend both harm (*ubhaya-byābādhāyapi ceteti*), and one experiences no mental pain and grief.

The Buddha explains arahantship:<sup>34</sup>

- [1] Considering your own good, bhikkhus, it is enough to strive for the goal with diligence;
- [2] considering the good of others, it is enough to strive for the goal with diligence;
- [3] considering the good of both, it is enough to strive for the goal with diligence.

The Buddha explains arahantship to the bandit Aṅgulimāla:<sup>35</sup>

**Stopped have I, Aṅgulimāla! You too stop!**  
(*Thito ahaṃ, Aṅgulimāla! Tvaṅca tiṭṭhā!*)

These words of The Buddha's echo His every utterance:

‘Stopped have I! You too stop!’

The Buddha spent forty-five years teaching the Dhamma out of compassion for the world. The only thing He taught was for us to stop: stop being reborn, and save ourselves and countless other beings from our harm. To want to delay our stopping, to teach others to delay their stopping, for any whatsoever reason, and thereby to risk again countless rebirths, with again harm to ourselves and countless other beings, is not only Mickey Mouse in cloud-cuckoo land, it is eminently selfish and nothing less than proud and uncompassionate: a sign of immense ignorance about ignorance, the origin of ignorance, the cessation of ignorance, and the way leading to the cessation of ignorance. It amounts to little less than wrong view (*micchā diṭṭhi*), because such conduct goes contrary to everything The Buddha teaches, which means we do not have full faith in The Buddha's enlightenment: there are no two ways about it.

If you are a good Buddhist, if you have full faith in The Buddha's enlightened wisdom, you will understand that the only realistic and true way to save countless beings from harm, the only realistic and true way to practise infinite compassion, is to do as The Buddha did, to do as He advised all wise people to do: to realize the Third Noble Truth, Nibbāna and arahantship, to become a harmless one (*ahiṃsako*).

Once there was a Brahmin who said to The Buddha:<sup>36</sup>

**I am the Harmless One, Master Gotama, I am the Harmless One.**

The Buddha explained:

**If one were as one's name implies,  
You would be a harmless one.  
But it is one who does no harm at all  
By body, speech or mind,  
Who really is a harmless one,**

<sup>33</sup> A.III.II.i.5 ‘*Nibbuta-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Extinguished Sutta’)

<sup>34</sup> S.II.I.iii.2 ‘*Dutiya Dasa-Bala-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Second Ten Powers Sutta’)

<sup>35</sup> M.II.iv.6 ‘*Aṅgulimāla-Suttaṃ*’ (Aṅgulimāla was a serial killer who gained faith in The Buddha, ordained as a bhikkhu, and became an arahant.)

<sup>36</sup> S.I.VII.i.5 ‘*Ahiṃsaka-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Harmless One Sutta’)

**As he does not harm others.**

If you aim for arahantship, you aim for harmlessness. If you attain arahantship, you become a harmless one, and will have saved countless beings. You will in that case be like The Buddha and other arahants, and your life will accord with The Buddha's words, for as The Buddha says, your life will be:<sup>37</sup>

**for the many's welfare** (*bahujana hitāya*), **for the many's happiness** (*bahujana sukhāya*), **for the benefit** (*atthāya*), **well being** (*hitāya*), **and happiness** (*sukhāya*), **of devas and men** (*deva-manussānaṃ*).

If you teach only one other person to become a harmless one, you will have saved twice times countless beings. If you teach ten or a hundred or a thousand people to aim for harmlessness, there is no speaking of how many beings you will have saved. Then, and only then, have you so much as begun to understand the beginning of The Buddha's Teaching; and then, and only then, can you so much as begin to understand the middle of The Buddha's Teaching; and then, and only then, can you so much as begin to understand the end of the Buddha's Teaching. The beginning, middle and end of The Buddha's Teaching is Right View (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*).<sup>38</sup>

Thank you.

<sup>37</sup> D.ii.3 '*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta')

<sup>38</sup> Right View is discussed and analysed as the forerunner of the Noble Eightfold Path below in 'Absolute Discrimination', p.233.

**A**nd, bhikkhus, what is the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodha-Gāminī Paṭipadā Ariya-Saccaṃ*)?

It is only this Noble Eightfold Path (*ayam-eva Ariyo Aṭṭhaṅgiko Maggo*), namely:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| [1] Right View ( <i>Sammā-Diṭṭhi</i> ),        | [5] Right Livelihood ( <i>Sammā-Ājīvo</i> ),      |
| [2] Right Intention ( <i>Sammā-Saṅkappo</i> ), | [6] Right Effort ( <i>Sammā-Vāyāmo</i> ),         |
| [3] Right Speech ( <i>Sammā-Vācā</i> ),        | [7] Right Mindfulness ( <i>Sammā-Sati</i> ),      |
| [4] Right Action ( <i>Sammā-Kammanto</i> ),    | [8] Right Concentration ( <i>Sammā-Samādhi</i> ). |

(S.V.XII.ii.1 '*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*' ('Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta'))

**T**his is the only path (*es-eva maggo*): there is no other (*natth-añño*) for the purification of insight. Walk this path, and you will bewilder Māra.

(Dhp.xx.2 '*Magga Vagga*' ('Path Chapter'))

**I**n whatever Dhamma-Vinaya, Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariyo Aṭṭhaṅgiko Maggo*) is not found (*na upalabbhati*),

- [1] the [first] ascetic is there also not found (*samaṇ-opi tattha na upalabbhati*).
- [2] The second ascetic is there also not found (*dutiyo-opi tattha samaṇo na upalabbhati*).
- [3] The third ascetic is there also not found (*tatiyo-opi tattha samaṇo na upalabbhati*).
- [4] The fourth ascetic is there also not found (*catuttho-opi tattha samaṇo na upalabbhati*).

**B**ut in whatever Dhamma-Vinaya, Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is found (*upalabbhati*),

- [1] the [first] ascetic is there also found (*samaṇ-opi tattha upalabbhati*).
- [2] The second ascetic is there also found (*dutiyo-opi tattha samaṇo upalabbhati*).
- [3] The third ascetic is there also found (*tatiyo-opi tattha samaṇo upalabbhati*).
- [4] The fourth ascetic is there also found (*catuttho-opi tattha samaṇo upalabbhati*).

**I**n this very Dhamma-Vinaya, Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is found (*upalabbhati*). Here only (*idh-eva*), Subhadda, is the [first] ascetic (*samaṇo*), here the second ascetic (*idha dutiyo samaṇo*), here the third ascetic (*tatiyo samaṇo*), here the fourth ascetic (*idha catuttho samaṇo*).

Devoid are other teachings of ascetics (*suññā para-ppavādā samaṇebhi aññehi*).

(D.ii.3 '*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta'))<sup>1</sup>

**I**f any ascetic or Brahmin should speak thus:

'This is not the Fourth Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering, taught by the ascetic Gotama.

'Having rejected this Fourth Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering, I shall make known another Fourth Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering': this is impossible.

(S.V.XII.ii.9 '*Saṅkāsana-Suttaṃ*' ('Illustration Sutta'))

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<sup>1</sup> Please see this quotation discussed under 'Here Only, Subhadda', p.307.









THE PATH LEADING TO HAPPINESS VERY DIFFICULT TO SEE  
The Fourth Noble Truth

Upon request, the author planned to give a series of talks discussing the various factors of the Noble Eightfold Path.

‘Absolute Discrimination’ discusses all eight factors.

‘Knocking at the Right Door’ discusses the first factor, Right View.

‘Beauty Is in the Eye of the Blind’ discusses the second factor, Right Intention, with especial emphasis on the first of the three types of Right Intention, renunciative intention.

The first talk was delivered, the last two were not delivered, nor were any more talks prepared.

ABSOLUTE DISCRIMINATION ..... 231

10FOLD PATH	intention 3fold	mundane	NOBLE 8FOLD PATH	object of
wrong/right	knowledge	path-	3 groupings	7 factors of
FACTORS	liberation	speech 4fold	of noble one	PRACTICE
action 3fold	livelihood bhikkhu	supramundane	NOBLE ONE	two extremes
analysis	livelihood layman	wrong/right	factors of	middle way
concentration 4fold	livelihood trades	METAPHOR	NOBLE RIGHT	VIEW
effort 4fold	mindfulness 4foundations	stream	CONCENTRATION	forerunner
			5factored	

KNOCKING AT THE RIGHT DOOR ..... 245

KAMMA	consumerist-	-knowing&seeing	- result of kamma
w/right view	democratic-	materialist-	non-duality-
w/wrong view	-dependent cessation	-matter exists	progress&development-
VIEW	-dependent origination	-mental factors exist	-modern psychology
-all exists	economist-	-metaphysics	-psychotherapy
-all exists	eternity-	-middle way	right-
-all things self	ethnological-	-modern orthodoxy	-science&economics
annihilationist-	= forerunner	-modern science	-social sciences
anthropological-	-formations happiness	-modern morality	socialist-
behaviourist-	-formations self	-Nibbāna exists	sociological-
self-	-formations permanence	- kamma	techno-theist-
capitalist-	-formed element	- kamma	-unformed element
communist-	historical-	- result of kamma	wrong-
-consciousness exists	industrialist-		

BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BLIND ..... 263

ATTENTION	PERCEPTION, PERVERTED	RENUNCIATIVE INTENTION	modern media
wise-	modern progress	8fold Uposatha	modern values
unwise-	modern science	= torture	precepts
HAPPINESS	modern government	precepts	8fold Uposatha
dangerous	modern education	jhāna	SIGN
not dangerous	modern media	SENSUAL INTENTION	beautiful
INTENTION	modern values	modern progress	unbeautiful
3 right-	precepts	modern science	SIMILE
3 wrong-	8fold Uposatha	modern government	mountain of ignorance
sensual-		modern education	
renunciative-			



Today's talk is on the Fourth Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodha-Gāminī Paṭipadā Ariya-Saccaṃ*), the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Aṭṭh-aṅgika Magga*) that leads to Nibbāna. We shall today look at the Noble Eightfold Path as a whole, and only briefly at the individual factors.

In His very first teaching of Dhamma, The Buddha began by explaining the two paths without a purpose, and the one path with a purpose, the Noble Eightfold Path:<sup>1</sup>

**These two extremes, bhikkhus, ought not to be followed by one gone forth from the house-life. What two?**

**There is the practice of indulgence in sensuality (*kāmasukhallik-ānuyogo*), which is inferior (*hīno*), vulgar (*gamma*), of the common man (*pothujjaniko*), ignoble (*an-ariyo*), and without purpose (*an-attha-saṃhito*).**

This extreme is the path of the six senses, the stupid sixfold path, so to speak: the path of pleasant sights, sounds, odours, flavours, touches and sensations, perceptions, etc.

**And there is the practice of self-mortification (*atta-kilamath-ānuyogo*), which is suffering (*dukkho*), ignoble (*an-ariyo*), and without purpose (*an-attha-saṃhito*).**

This extreme is the super-stupid sixfold path, so to speak: the path of unpleasant sights, sounds, odours, flavours, touches and sensations, perceptions, etc. These two stupid paths make for blindness, ignorance, trouble, suffering and continued rebirth (even in hell).

**The middle way (*majjhimā paṭipadā*) discovered by the Tathāgata avoids both these extremes.**

**It is vision-making (*cakkhu-karaṇī*), it is knowledge-making (*ñāṇa-karaṇī*), and to peace (*upasamāya*), to direct knowledge (*abhiññāya*), to enlightenment (*sambodhāya*), to Nibbāna (*Nibbānāya*), it leads (*saṃvattati*).**

**And what is the middle way? It is simply the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Aṭṭh-aṅgika Magga*), that is to say, Right View (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*), Right Intention (*Sammā Saṅkappa*), Right Speech (*Sammā Vācā*), Right Action (*Sammā Kamanta*), Right Livelihood (*Sammā Ājīva*), Right Effort (*Sammā Vāyāma*), Right Mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*), Right Concentration (*Sammā Samādhi*).**

The Noble Eightfold Path comprises three groupings. There is an explanation of each grouping by an arahant bhikkhuni Dhammadinnā to her former husband, Visākha (she was praised by The Buddha as chief bhikkhuni in explaining the Dhamma):<sup>2</sup>

[1] Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood: these things comprise the morality grouping (*sīla-kkhandhe*).

[2] Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration: these things comprise the concentration grouping (*samādhi-kkhandhe*).

[3] Right View and Right Intention: these things comprise the wisdom grouping (*paññā-kkhandhe*).

<sup>1</sup> S.V.XII.ii.1 'Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ' ('Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta')

<sup>2</sup> The Venerable Dhammadinnā's explanation was subsequently approved of by The Buddha: 'If you had asked me the meaning of this, I should have explained it to you in the same way that the bhikkhuni Dhammadinnā has explained it. Such is its meaning, and so should you remember it.' (M.I.v.4 'Cūḷa-Vedalla-Suttaṃ' ('Small Questions&Answers Sutta'))

Now, when we practise the Noble Eightfold Path, we are practising morality, concentration and wisdom, but that is not the same as to say that when we practise morality, concentration and wisdom, we are practising the Noble Eightfold Path. The arahant bhikkhuni Dhammadinnā explains:<sup>2</sup>

**The three groupings are not included by the Noble Eightfold Path, friend Visākha, but the Noble Eightfold Path is included by the three groupings.**

What does this mean? It means that merely because we give *dāna*, observe the five precepts, once in a blue moon spend twenty minutes casually watching our breath, and occasionally listen to a Dhamma tape while driving to and from work and the shops, then even though those actions in a small way constitute practice of morality, concentration and wisdom, they do not constitute practice of the Noble Eightfold Path. Even if we go for a three-month retreat, and observe the eight precepts, and develop the jhānas, that does not constitute practice of The Noble Eightfold Path either. The Noble Eightfold Path is namely nothing less than the stream-entry path (*sot-āpatti-magga*): it carries us to Nibbāna just as the stream of a river would carry us down to the sea, inexorably. The Buddha explains:<sup>3</sup>

**Just as, bhikkhus, the Ganges river slants down towards the sea, slopes down towards the sea, and inclines towards the sea, so too a bhikkhu who develops and cultivates the Noble Eightfold Path slants towards Nibbāna (*Nibbāna-ninno*), slopes towards Nibbāna (*Nibbāna-ponā*), and inclines towards Nibbāna (*Nibbāna-pabbhārā*).**

Only once we have entered the stream that goes to Nibbāna do the eight factors each become a factor of the path (*magg-aṅga*). Only a Noble One (*Ariya*) has entered upon the Noble Path (*Ariya-Magga*): it goes without saying. The Buddha explains:<sup>4</sup>

**This Noble Eightfold Path is the stream (*soto*)... One who possesses this Noble Eightfold Path is a stream-enterer (*sot-āpanno*).**

Hence, although the Noble Eightfold Path cannot be less than the stream-entry path (*sot-āpatti magga*), it can be more, for it can also be the higher noble paths: the once-return path (*sakad-āgāmi magga*), and the non-return path (*an-āgāmi magga*). When we attain the arahant path (*arahatta magga*), however, our path is no longer the Noble Eightfold Path, but the **Tenfold Path** (*DasAṅgika Magga*).<sup>5</sup>

So long as we are an ignorant common person (*puṭhujjana*), however, our path is not the Noble Eightfold Path. But we may at times practise the factors. In that case, the individual factor is what The Buddha calls mundane (*lokiya*):<sup>6</sup>

**affected by taints (*s-āsavā*), partaking of merit (*puñña-bhāgiyā*), ripening on the side of attachment (*upadhi-vepakkā*).**

Here, being mundane, the individual factor is not a path factor (*magg-aṅgaṃ*).

<sup>3</sup> S.V.I 'Gaṅgā-Peyyāla Vaggo' ('Ganges Series Chapter'), 'Paṭhama Samuddaninna-Suttam' ('First Sea-Slant Sutta')

<sup>4</sup> S.V.i.5 'Dutiya Sāriputta-Suttam' ('Second Sāriputta Sutta')

<sup>5</sup> The two extra factors of the arahant's path will become clear as the talk progresses.

<sup>6</sup> M.III.ii.7 'Mahā-Cattārisaka-Suttam' ('Great Forty Sutta')

And the result of practising the mundane factors is only happy rebirths,<sup>7</sup> which happy although they may be are an ignoble result. So long as our Right View is only mundane, it is also uncertain: we may still adopt wrong view, undertake the ignoble search,<sup>8</sup> and even enter upon the wrong eightfold path to unhappy rebirths. That is why The Buddha never speaks of the mundane Noble Eightfold Path: it is a contradiction in words.

Once we have become a Noble One (*Ariya*), however, (once we have attained Nibbāna), the eight factors have come together to comprise the Noble Eightfold Path. In that case, the individual factor is what The Buddha calls supramundane (*lokuttarā*):<sup>9</sup> **Noble** (*Ariyā*), **taintless** (*an-āsavā*), **supramundane** (*lokuttarā*), **a path factor** (*magg-aṅgam*).

The result of developing the Noble Eightfold Path is assuredly arahantship (the end of rebirth and suffering). It will take place at the latest after seven more rebirths. When we have become a Noble One (*Ariya*), we will have done away with identity view (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*), will have absolute faith in the law of kamma, and will have overcome doubt about The Buddha's enlightenment, and the true path to liberation. Then is our Right View such that we are incapable of adopting wrong view, incapable of undertaking the ignoble search, and incapable of entering the wrong eightfold path to unhappy rebirths. Right View discriminates: absolute Right View discriminates absolutely.

In practical terms, what does it mean that we have entered the stream? To enter the stream is to know and see Nibbāna, as vividly as to see the fish, shells, gravel, etc. in the limpid waters of a mountain lake.<sup>10</sup> When we know and see Nibbāna, there is what The Buddha calls Noble Right Concentration (*Ariyo Sammā Samādhi*): it has Nibbāna as object.

The Buddha explains that to develop that concentration, we need to develop five things:<sup>11</sup>

**Take the case, bhikkhus, of a bhikkhu who... enters and abides in the first jhāna....**

**This is, bhikkhus, the first development of the five-factored Noble Concentration.**

The second development is the second jhāna, the third the third, and the fourth development is the fourth jhāna: that makes four factors. That is what The Buddha also calls Right Concentration (*Sammā Samādhi*).<sup>12</sup> For our Right Concentration to become a factor of the Noble Eightfold Path, however, the object of our jhāna needs to be Nibbāna. And for our Right Concentration to become the five-factored Noble Right Concentration, we need to develop the fifth factor, which is the ability to look back, and know and see that we knew and saw Nibbāna: The Buddha calls it the reviewing sign (*paccavekkhaṇa nimitta*).<sup>13</sup> Only

<sup>7</sup> Please see the Commentary to this sutta.

<sup>8</sup> For the ignoble and noble search, please see above footnote 40, p.205.

<sup>9</sup> M.III.ii.7 '*Mahā-Cattārīsaka-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Forty Sutta')

<sup>10</sup> For this The Buddha's simile, please see above, p.200.

<sup>11</sup> A.V.iii.8 '*Pañc-Aṅgika-Suttaṃ*' ('Five Factored Sutta')

<sup>12</sup> The Buddha explains: 'And what, bhikkhus, is Right Concentration (*Sammā-Samādhi*)? Here, bhikkhus... a bhikkhu enters and dwells in the first jhāna... in the second jhāna... in the third jhāna... in the fourth jhāna.... This is called Right Concentration.' (e.g. D.ii.9 '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭ-jhāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta'))

<sup>13</sup> The Commentary to this sutta explains that it is the *Paccavekkhaṇa Ñāna* (Reviewing

when we are able to review the sign of Nibbāna, can we know and see whether we have attained to stream-entry, once-return, etc. and develop the Path further.

Noble Right Concentration is jhāna concentration with Nibbāna as object: whenever we know and see Nibbāna, we are in jhāna. But Noble Right Concentration does not arise alone. It arises together with the remaining seven factors of the Noble Eightfold Path: Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, and Right Mindfulness. The Buddha explains:<sup>14</sup>

**Unification of mind** (*cittassa ek-aggatā*) **equipped with these seven factors is called Noble Right Concentration** (*Ariyo Sammā Samādhi*), **with its supports** (*sa-upaniso*), **with its requisites** (*sa-parikkhāro*).<sup>15</sup>

In other words, the eight factors co-operate: their forerunner<sup>16</sup> is Right View. Let us see how they co-operate.

View is the forerunner (*pubbaṅgamā*). Our view is the way we see things: if our view is materialist, we see things as matter; if spiritualist, we see things as mind; if democratic, we see things as equal; if relativist, we see things as arbitrary; if our view is pragmatic<sup>17</sup> we see things as independent of views (the magic word is ‘practical’<sup>18</sup>), and if our view is nihilistic, we see things as nothing at all. Whatever our view, it foreruns our conduct of body, speech, and mind: it is the forerunner of the path of our life. For example, with the highly esteemed pragmatic view as forerunner, ๓๓๓๓๓๓๓๓ politics in parliament and home are unprincipled and confused.

Confusion, however, does not arise when our forerunner is Right View. The Buddha explains:<sup>19</sup>

**And how is Right View the forerunner?**

**One understands wrong view** (*micchā ditṭhi*) **as wrong view, and Right View** (*Sammā Ditṭhi*) **as Right View: this is one’s Right View.**

When we have Right View, we have sufficient understanding about reality so as to make absolute discrimination<sup>20</sup> between Right View and wrong view.

Knowledge). This is a commentarial designation for the knowledge that arises when one looks back upon one’s attainment of Nibbāna, and one knows that one knew and saw Nibbāna, and one sees which defilements have been eradicated, and which still remain. The arahant’s Reviewing Knowledge is that there are no defilements left.

<sup>14</sup> M.III.ii.7 ‘*Mahā-Cattārīsaka-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Great Forty Sutta’)

<sup>15</sup> Please see also D.ii.5 ‘*Janavasabha-Suttaṃ*’ (Janavasabha is the deity who speaks to The Buddha), S.V.I.iii.8 ‘*Samādhi-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Concentration Sutta’), and A.VII.v.2 ‘*Samādhi-Parikkhāra-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Concentration Requisites Sutta’).

<sup>16</sup> FORERUN: to run or come before: to precede... FORERUNNER a runner or messenger sent before: a precursor: a prognostic (CTCD)

<sup>17</sup> PRAGMATIC: solving problems in a way which suits the present conditions rather than obeying fixed theories, ideas or rules • This pragmatic approach has made it the oldest and most successful political party in the democratic world. • We need someone who is pragmatic rather than ideological, and can respond quickly to changing situations. (CIDE)

<sup>18</sup> Here, the author explained that just as the fallacy of the ‘disinterested observer’ is a child of ๓๓๓๓๓๓๓๓ science, so is the fallacy of pragmatism. Both deny that acts of body, speech and mind are governed by the intention, which is governed by the view. It is because ๓๓๓๓๓๓๓๓ science, even ๓๓๓๓๓๓๓๓ science of the mind, is materialist in principle.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted also above, p.138.

<sup>20</sup> DISCRIMINATE: If you can discriminate between two things, you can recognize that they are different. PLEASE CONTINUE NEXT PAGE.

Without Right View, it is, of course, impossible.

The Buddha explains:

And what, bhikkhus, is wrong view?

- **‘There is nothing offered, nothing sacrificed.** No kamma in offering, which means no result from offering either.
- **No fruit or result of good and bad actions.** No need to discriminate between good and bad, because no result of kamma (*kamma-vipāka*), which means no kamma either.
- **No this world, no other world.** No rebirth into different worlds.
- **No mother, no father.** Our parents are no one special; they do not deserve discriminating treatment. There is no kamma or *kamma-vipāka* in treating them either one way or the other.<sup>21</sup>
- **No beings who are born spontaneously.** No devas and other such beings.
- **No good and virtuous ascetics and Brahmins in the world who have realized for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.’** Arahants and Buddhas are nothing special, just imaginings.

These ancient wrong views are familiar to us, for they constitute the orthodox modern view. The dogmas for this wrong view are, for example:

- ‘Basically, all views are absolutely OK.’
- ‘It’s absolutely natural to do wrong, never mind what you do.’
- ‘How we speak is absolutely unimportant; only communication matters.’
- ‘Men and women are absolutely equal!’
- ‘The majority is always absolutely right.’
- ‘All Nibbānas are the same.’
- ‘All paths lead to Nibbāna.’
- ‘The Sangha (Third Gem<sup>22</sup>) is absolutely all beings on one of the paths to one of the Nibbānas.’
- ‘The Dhamma (Second Gem) is absolutely any teaching that is spiritual.’
- ‘Fundamentally, we are absolutely all of us Buddhas (the First Gem).’

The orthodox modern view makes absolute discrimination... against discrimination. Being bound up with sensuality, conceit, and absolutely stupendous ignorance, the orthodox modern view is absolutely wrong view.

The Buddha explains Right View:

And what, bhikkhus, is Right View?

- ☉ **‘There is something offered, something sacrificed.** There is kamma in offering,

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ferent. ☐ He is incapable of discriminating between a good idea and a terrible one... (CCED)

<sup>21</sup> The commentary to the *‘Sāmañña-Phala-Suttam’* (‘Asceticism Fruit Sutta’) explains: ‘By denying kamma, one denies its result; by denying the result, one denies kamma. Thus all these thinkers, by denying both, in effect espouse acausalism (*ahetuka-vāda*), the inefficacy of action (*akiriya-vāda*), and moral nihilism (*nathika-vāda*).’

<sup>22</sup> TRIPLE GEM (*Ti-Ratana*): a term for The Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. When The Buddha speaks of a Buddha, He means one who has attained to the enlightenment of a Buddha. When He speaks of the Dhamma, He means the Dhamma as it is rediscovered and taught by a Buddha (please see His explanation above, p.146). And when He speaks of the Sangha, He means those who have ordained into the bhikkhu/bhikkhuni Sangha.



which means there is a result from offering.

- ☉ **There is fruit and result of good and bad actions.** We need to discriminate between good and bad actions, because there is kamma and *kamma-vipāka*.
- ☉ **There is this world, the other world.** There is rebirth into different worlds.
- ☉ **There is a mother and father.** Our parents are special; they deserve discriminating treatment. There is good kamma and good *kamma-vipāka* in treating them well, bad kamma and bad *kamma-vipāka* in not treating them well.
- ☉ **There are beings who are born spontaneously.** There are devas and other such beings.
- ☉ There are good and virtuous ascetics and Brahmins in the world who have realized for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world. **Ara-hants and Buddhas are absolutely especially wise.**

Since our view foreruns our values, it foreruns also our intention, (what we want to do). When we have Right View, we make absolute discrimination. The Buddha explains:

**And how is Right View the forerunner?**

**One understands wrong intention (*micchā saṅkappa*) as wrong intention, and Right Intention (*Sammā Saṅkappa*) as Right Intention: this is one's Right View.**

Wrong intention is threefold:

**And what, bhikkhus, is wrong intention?**

- [1] **Sensual intention (*kāma-saṅkappa*).** Lust and greed, wanting to have, wanting to get, wanting to continue.<sup>23</sup>
- [2] **Ill intention (*byāpāda saṅkappa*).** Hatred and dislike, malevolence.
- [3] **Harmful intention (*vihimsā-saṅkappa*).** Wanting to hurt another, cruelty.

**And what, bhikkhus, is Right Intention?**

- [1] **Renunciative intention (*nekkhamma-saṅkappa*).**<sup>24</sup> Generosity (*dāna*), wanting to give, wanting to give up, contentment, wanting to stop, even chastity: the highest such intention is to renounce the household life, to become a bhikkhu or bhikkhuni.

Higher than that, though, is the intention to renounce sights, sounds, odours, flavours, etc. in favour of one's single meditation subject.<sup>25</sup> With that intention, one may attain the jhānas, and practise the even higher re-

<sup>23</sup> The commentary to '*Sal-Āyatana-Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Six Bases Analysis Sutta') explains pleasant, unpleasant and neutral sensation of the household life as the positions of those intent on *samsāra*, whereas the same sensations of renunciation (seeing the impermanence, suffering and non-self of formations) are the positions of those intent on the cessation of *samsāra*.

<sup>24</sup> RENOUNCE: '... withdraw from, discontinue, forsake, (renounce... all thought of, design, attempt, son &c., friend, friendship; renounce the world, abandon society or temporal affairs)... [RE- <prefix in Latin words meaning here 'back (recede)... away (relegate)']', Latin *nuntio* announce [POD]' 'give up (esp a habit) voluntarily; abandon: renounce strong drink, cigarettes, dangerous driving ○ They've renounced their old criminal way of life ○ I soon renounced all thoughts of getting home before dark... [OALD]' 'RENUNCIATION... RENUNCIATIVE [CTCD]'

<sup>25</sup> This intention is called *vitakka* (applied thought), applying one's mind to one's meditation subject rather than to other objects, and attaining jhāna: included in The Buddha's explanation of Noble Right Intention.

nunciation of Vipassanā. With that intention, one may attain to the highest renunciation of all, Nibbāna and arahantship: the renunciation of rebirth, ageing&death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair, which is the renunciation of the five aggregates of clinging, of all whatsoever formations.

- [2] **Good intention** (*abyāpāda saṅkappo*). Benevolence, lovingkindness (*mettā*) towards all beings, human and non-human.
- [3] **Harmless intention** (*avihiṃsā-saṅkappo*). Caring, compassion (*karuṇā*) towards all beings, human and non-human.

Since our view foreruns our intention, our view foreruns also our action of speech. When we have Right View, we make absolute discrimination. The Buddha explains:

**And how is Right View the forerunner?**

**One understands wrong speech** (*micchā vācā*) **as wrong speech, and Right Speech** (*Sammā Vācā*) **as Right Speech: this is one's Right View.**

Wrong Speech is fourfold:

**And what, bhikkhus, is wrong speech?**

- [1] **Lies** (*musā-vādo*). We speak untruth, intending gain.
- [2] **Slander** (*pisuṇāya vācā*). We speak badly of others, intending conflict.
- [3] **Abuse** (*pharusāya vācā*). We speak harshly and rudely, intending harm.
- [4] **Prattle** (*samphappalāpo*). We speak indiscriminately, intending no good purpose: sports, sensation, family, idle statistics, etc.

**And what, bhikkhus, is Right Speech?**

- [1] **Abstinence from lies** (*musāvādā veramaṇī*). We speak only the truth, intending even to suffer loss.
- [2] **Abstinence from slander** (*pisuṇāya vācāya veramaṇī*). We avoid speaking badly of others, and if need be, there is no intention for conflict.
- [3] **Abstinence from abuse** (*pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī*). We speak politely and properly, intending good.
- [4] **Abstinence from prattle** (*samphappalāpā veramaṇī*). We speak discriminately, intending a good purpose: for example, never sports. We may exchange pleasantries upon meeting a stranger, or upon meeting someone after long time's separation, but we do not go on. We may tell a story, but not to entertain: to illustrate a useful point. If we have nothing useful to say, we remain intending silence.

Since our view foreruns our intention, our view foreruns also our action of the body. When we have Right View, we make absolute discrimination. The Buddha explains:

**And how is Right View the forerunner?**

**One understands wrong action** (*micchā kammanta*) **as wrong action, and Right Action** (*Sammā Kamman-ta*) **as Right Action: this is one's Right View.**

Wrong action is threefold:

**And what, bhikkhus, is wrong action?**

- [1] **Killing** (*pāṇātipāto*). We are violent and we deprive another of life: mosquito, cockroach, ant, rat, fish, cow, pig, baby in the womb, men, women and children in a war, etc.

- [2] **Theft** (*adinnādānaṃ*). We takes another's property, we do not pay our taxes, we use pirated computer programs, etc.
- [3] **Venereal misconduct** (*kāmesu micchā cārā*). We engage in venereal commerce with another's spouse, partner or betrothed, someone who is underage, unconsenting, unmarried<sup>26</sup>, etc.

**And what, bhikkhus, is Right Action?**

- [1] **Abstinence from killing** (*pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*). We live in peace and with good intention towards all beings. If there are vermin in our house or garden, we live in peace with them, or we find ways to get rid of them other than killing them.
- [2] **Abstinence from theft** (*adinnādānā veramaṇī*). We never take anything that we are not entitled to take, we pay our taxes, we use only legal computer programs, etc.
- [3] **Abstinence from venereal misconduct** (*kāmesu micchā cārā veramaṇī*). We are content with our spouse. The highest such abstinence is chastity.

We all need to gain the four requisites of life: clothes, food, dwelling and medicine. That is our livelihood. Since our view foreruns our intention, and our speech and action, our view foreruns also our livelihood. When we have Right View, we make absolute discrimination. The Buddha explains:

**And how is Right View the forerunner?**

**One understands wrong livelihood** (*micchā ājīva*) **as wrong livelihood, and Right Livelihood** (*Sammā Ājīva*) **as Right Livelihood: this is one's Right View.**

Wrong livelihood is manifold. Generally speaking, it is wrong because it is gained by wrong speech and wrong action. For laypeople, The Buddha explains also five trades that are wrong livelihood:<sup>27</sup>

**Five, bhikkhus, are the trades not to be plied by a lay-disciple. What five?**

**Trade in arms, trade in beings, trade in flesh, trade in liquor and trade in poisons.**

These trades may be plied without wrong speech and action, but they have wrong speech and action as result. For example, arms (e.g. a missile/bomb) and poisons (e.g. pesticide/herbicide) serve one purpose only: to injure, kill and destroy. And when there is liquor, there is wrong speech and action.

For bhikkhus, The Buddha explains:

**And what, bhikkhus, is wrong livelihood?<sup>28</sup>**

- **Scheming.** One speaks and acts so as to invite admiration and devotion: one refers to one's own (superior) practice.<sup>29</sup>
- **Talking.** One wants to please the laity: one talks indiscriminately, one initiates talk, about oneself, even prattle, one fondles children, etc.

<sup>26</sup> This constitutes breaking the third of the five precepts. The only unmarried object of venereal commerce by which the precept has not been broken is the professional prostitute. The criteria of **moderate** orthodoxy accord with the wrong view of sensualism and equality, and are as a consequence incommensurate with the workings of kamma.

<sup>27</sup> A.V.IV.iii.5 'Vañijjā-Suttam' ('Trades Sutta')

<sup>28</sup> Analysis from Vis.i PoP.60-82

<sup>29</sup> For The Buddha's injunction against a bhikkhu's speaking of his own practice in any way, either directly or indirectly, please see above, footnote 40, p.193.

- **Hinting.** One makes hints so as to receive requisites.
- **Belittling.** One reproaches the laity, criticizes them, ridicules them, tells tales about them, etc.
- **Pursuing gain with gain.** One gives food, flowers, etc. to the laity, to gain devotion: for example, one offers food to the aged or to orphans.

The Buddha explains very many other things that are wrong livelihood for a bhikkhu. For example, to tell fortunes, recite charms, sprinkle ‘holy’ water, to practise medicine (which would include running rehabilitation centres for drug addicts, Aids victims, etc.), and to accept, possess or use money under absolutely any form are, according to the Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, absolutely wrong livelihood for a bhikkhu.<sup>30</sup> The Buddha forbids it absolutely: it is absolutely against The Buddha’s Vinaya.

**And what, bhikkhus, is Right Livelihood?**

**Here, a noble disciple (*Ariya sāvako*) abandons wrong livelihood, and earns his living by right livelihood.**

Generally speaking, Right Livelihood is gained by Right Speech and Right Action. For laypeople it is good and honest work that does not depend on harming anyone, and for bhikkhus, it accords absolutely with The Buddha’s Vinaya.

Now, our intention makes for kamma of the mind, our speech is kamma of speech, our action is kamma of the body, and our livelihood is kamma of body and speech. To perform those kammās, we need to make effort. If wrong view foreruns our effort, it is wrong because our perception of the object is wrong; if Right View foreruns our effort, it is Right Effort (*Sammā Vāyāma*) because our perception of the object is right: the Dhamma, ultimately Nibbāna.<sup>31</sup> The Buddha explains:

- **One makes an effort to abandon wrong view, and to enter upon Right View: this is one’s Right Effort....**
- **One makes an effort to abandon wrong intention, and to enter upon Right Intention: this is one’s Right Effort....**
- **One makes an effort to abandon wrong speech, and to enter upon Right Speech: this is one’s Right Effort....**
- **One makes an effort to abandon wrong action, and to enter upon Right Action: this is one’s Right Effort....**
- **One makes an effort to abandon wrong livelihood, and to enter upon Right Livelihood: this is one’s Right Effort.**

Right Effort is fourfold:<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Please see, for example, the abstinences of the third fruit of asceticism, mentioned above, p. 196. (D.i.2 ‘*Sāmañña-Phala-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Asceticism Fruit Sutta’))

<sup>31</sup> In fact, when the object is perceived wrongly, the object becomes wrong thereby, meaning that the object is wrong.

<sup>32</sup> A.IV.I.ii.4 ‘*Samvara-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Restraint Sutta’) The author chose to quote from this sutta rather than (as before) the ‘Great Forty Sutta’, because it is simpler. The ‘Great Forty Sutta’ says: ‘And what, bhikkhus, is Right Effort? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu generates zeal for the non-arising of unarisen evil, unwholesome states.... He generates zeal for the abandoning of arisen evil, unwholesome states.... He generates zeal for the arising of unarisen good, wholesome states.... He generates zeal for the maintenance of arisen wholesome states, non-disappearance, strengthening, increase, and fulfilment by development; he makes effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives.’

There are, bhikkhus, these four efforts (*padhāna*). What four?

- [1] **The effort to restrain** (*saṃvara-padhāna*). We desist from wrong speech, action and livelihood, by observing the precepts. For example, a farmer may want to use poisons to protect his crops but desists.
- [2] **The effort to abandon** (*pahāna-padhāna*). We stop evil that we do. For example, a farmer who uses poisons stops doing so.
- [3] **The effort to develop** (*bhāvanā-padhāna*). We undertake something new. For example, we develop the three bases for making merit (*puñña-kiriya-vatthu*):<sup>33</sup> we make offerings (*dāna*); we develop morality (*sīla*) by undertaking the five precepts (or progress from five precepts to eight precepts); and we develop meditation (*bhāvanā*), which is Samatha and Vipassanā, and also study the Dhamma. We may even renounce the household life. And our farmer may develop new ways of farming, without using poisons.
- [4] **The effort to maintain** (*anurakkhaṇa-padhāna*). We continue the good of body, speech and mind that we do. For example, another farmer criticizes our farmer for not using poisons, but our farmer does not for that reason again use poisons: he only smiles at the other farmer's stupidity.

Now, just as every action requires effort, so does it require awareness of what one is doing, remembering how to do it: mindfulness. If wrong view foreruns our mindfulness, it is wrong because our perception of the object is wrong;<sup>34</sup> if Right View foreruns our mindfulness, it is Right Mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*) because our perception of the object is right: the Dhamma, ultimately Nibbāna. The Buddha explains:<sup>35</sup>

- **Mindfully one abandons wrong view, mindfully one enters upon Right View: this is one's Right Mindfulness....**
- **Mindfully one abandons wrong intention, mindfully one enters upon Right Intention: this is one's Right Mindfulness....**
- **Mindfully one abandons wrong speech, mindfully one enters upon Right Speech: this is one's Right Mindfulness....**
- **Mindfully one abandons wrong action, mindfully one enters upon Right Action: this is one's Right Mindfulness....**
- **Mindfully one abandons wrong livelihood, mindfully one enters upon Right Livelihood: this is one's Right Mindfulness....**

The Buddha explains Right Mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*) as fourfold:<sup>36</sup>

And what, bhikkhus, is Right Mindfulness? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu dwells

- [1] **contemplating the body in the body** (*kāye kāy-ānupassī*)....
- [2] **contemplating sensations as sensations** (*vedanāsu vedan-ānupassī*)....
- [3] **contemplating consciousness as consciousness** (*citte citt-ānupassī*)....
- [4] **contemplating dhammas as dhammas** (*dhammesu dhamm-ānupassī*), **ardent, discerning, mindful, having removed covetousness and grief for the world.**

This is what The Buddha also calls the four foundations of mindfulness (*cattāro sati-paṭṭhānā*). When we are founded in the four foundations of mindfulness, we

<sup>33</sup> Please see, for example, A.VIII.I.iv.6 'Puñña-Kiriya-Vatthu-Suttaṃ' ('Merit Works Sutta')

<sup>34</sup> Strictly speaking, mindfulness (*sati*) cannot be wrong, but please see further below.

<sup>35</sup> M.III.ii.7 'Mahā-Cattārisaka-Suttaṃ' ('Great Forty Sutta') Analysis from Vis.i PoP.61ff.

<sup>36</sup> S.V.I.i.8 'Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ' ('Analysis Sutta')

are aware of our body, speech and mind in accordance with the Dhamma: we are aware of the nature of the body and mind, and aware of what we do with them. The Buddha explains this also as the faculty of mindfulness (*sat-indriyaṃ*), which manifests also as a good memory:<sup>37</sup>

**And what, bhikkhus, is the faculty of mindfulness (*sat-indriyaṃ*)?**

**Here, bhikkhus, the noble disciple is mindful (*satimā*), possessing supreme mindfulness and discrimination (*paramena sati-nepakkena*), one who remembers and recollects what was done and said long ago.**<sup>38</sup>

The inevitable outcome of mindfulness is that one can recollect what one thought, said and did long ago: even with age, one's memory does not decline. Usually when people have used their mind in a discriminating and good, intelligent way, they do not go senile: those who do go senile are usually those whose life was devoid of morality and wisdom. Having the materialist view, of course, modern medicine thinks the cause is purely material.

Clearly, mindfulness of body, speech and mind in relation to the Dhamma can never be wrong mindfulness: for the Dhamma is the Truth. Nonetheless, The Buddha does speak of wrong mindfulness (*micchā sati*). But He is in that case referring only to the faculty of memory. Wrong mindfulness would be, for example, the footballer who has undergone much training in how to kick a ball, how to tackle and trick an opponent, etc.: he is indeed aware of his body. Part of his training is also to be aware of his mind. For example, his coach, and his captain, will before the match give his team a sermon, thundering on about how superior they are, and how important the match is. Then on the pitch, whenever his effort flags, he thinks it is because he is losing faith in the team's superiority. So he recollects the coach's sermon, and charges on: but the team is not superior, the match is not important, for the whole thing is merely organized, money-making insanity. Hence, the player's foundations of mindfulness are conjectures and concepts that do not reflect actuality. Nonetheless, as the footballer plays, he recollects how to kick the ball this way and that, etc., plays accordingly, and can therefore succeed, and become rich and famous, idolized by millions all over the world, interviewed on the media, and invited to dinner at the president's house. But the forerunner of the football idol's mindfulness is absolutely insane wrong view, which renders his mindfulness equally wrong. It is the same with the idolized pop singer, actor and actress, the hero at war, even the skilful butcher, fisherman, wheeler-dealer, bogus holy man, etc.

One of the most pervasive results of modern psychology's popularization is that people analyse their own mind states, and particularly the mind states of others: some have it even as their livelihood. But the analyses are conjectures and concepts forerun by wrong view. Hence, modern psychology's greatest legacy to the world is increased confusion in the guise of profound understanding: this disguised misunderstanding includes the profound understanding that absolute discrimination between good and bad is bad. When our view is that

<sup>37</sup> S.V.IV.i.9 '*Paṭhama Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('First Analysis Sutta')

<sup>38</sup> In the next sutta, '*Dutiya Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Second Analysis Sutta'), the Buddha explains the faculty of mindfulness as both mindfulness, discrimination and memory, as well as the four foundations of mindfulness.

such discrimination is bad, of course, faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha can never arise: or rather, it can arise only if The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha are modified into 'Me!' and we take refuge in the Triple Gem in ourselves.

Why does such wrong view arise? Owing to lack of wisdom: not understanding the Four Noble Truths. And then what happens? The Buddha explains:<sup>39</sup>

- In an unwise person of ignorance disposed, wrong view occurs.
- In one of wrong view, wrong intention occurs.
- In one of wrong intention, wrong speech occurs.
- In one of wrong speech, wrong action occurs.
- In one of wrong action, wrong livelihood occurs.
- In one of wrong livelihood, wrong effort occurs.
- In one of wrong effort, wrong mindfulness occurs.
- In one of wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration occurs.

This is dependent origination. With wrong view as condition, we are what the Buddha calls an untrue man (*a-sappurisa*).<sup>40</sup> And The Buddha explains the man more untrue than the untrue man (*asappurisa asappurisarato*) as the untrue man who thinks he is a true man (*sappurisa*): his wrong path is tenfold, for he possesses even wrong knowledge (*micchā ñāṇa*) and wrong liberation (*micchā vimutti*).<sup>41</sup> Instead of reviewing the sign of Nibbāna, he reviews the sign of something bad he did, and thinks it was good.<sup>42</sup> For example, a warlord who reviews the reports he receives from his chiefs of staff, the housewife who reviews the dead ants and cockroaches in her kitchen, the salesman who reviews duping an old lady into spending of her savings on something she did not need or want, and the dog who reviews the vicious barking that he has just completed. The condition for all these reviewing knowledges is the warlord's, the housewife's, the salesman's and the dog's wrong view.

Here, we may understand why it is so very important that we have knowledge about the Dhamma. Say, for example, we go our own way, thinking: 'The Bodhisatta had no teacher, so why do I need a teacher! I am my own teacher!' Or say we do have a teacher, but one ignorant of the True Dhamma.<sup>43</sup> With such ignorance as condition, we may then believe Nibbāna is a returning to what we call the Primordial Essence, Original Mind, etc.<sup>44</sup> And we may meditate, and meditate hard, and attain to what we believe is very deep concentration, even *jhāna*, and think we have attained cessation, Nibbāna. We may go into very deep sleep, and think we have attained Nibbāna. Why? Because we think Nibbāna is just a state of mind (*nāma*).<sup>45</sup> Thinking this, we may even think that Nibbāna is to be found through very subtle and so-called unattached delight in the six senses: a walk in nature, a sweet child, a beautiful Buddha statue, etc.:

<sup>39</sup> S.V.I.i.1 'Avijjā-Suttaṃ' ('Ignorance Sutta')

<sup>40</sup> S.V.I.iii.5 'Paṭhama A-Sa-Ppurisa-Suttaṃ' ('First Untrue Man Sutta')

<sup>41</sup> S.V.I.iii. 'Dutiya A-Ppurisa-Suttaṃ' ('Second Untrue Man Sutta')

<sup>42</sup> Please see the Commentary to this sutta.

<sup>43</sup> This is a reference to what The Buddha calls 'the miracle of instruction', discussed above, p.203.

<sup>44</sup> For a discussion of this view, please see above, p.142.

<sup>45</sup> For example, to confuse the attainment of mundane *jhāna* (material/immaterial) with the attainment of supramundane *jhāna*. Please see above, 169.

we do not understand that delight, however subtle, however supposedly detached, is attachment and lust.<sup>46</sup> We may also think that Nibbāna is found through so-called detached social work: visiting the sick, consoling the bereaved, providing for the poor, etc.: we do not understand that social work is attachment and grief for the world.<sup>47</sup> Because we have wrong view about Nibbāna, our entire path is wrong. We may then believe, for example, that the Buddha's injunctions for practising the precepts and seclusion are merely cultural relics from ancient India: we may think the factors of morality, concentration and wisdom can be manipulated with, and even think they constitute the Noble Eightfold Path. With these views as condition, the First and Second Noble Truths have been transformed into mere facts and concepts, our ignorance has if anything been augmented and made even more impenetrable, we are far, far removed from Nibbāna, and moving farther away all the time.<sup>48</sup>

Not so with Right View. Right View arises owing to knowledge (*vijjā*): knowledge of Nibbāna.<sup>49</sup> The Buddha explains:

- In a wise person who has arrived at knowledge, Right View occurs.
- In one of Right View, Right Intention occurs.
- In one of Right Intention, Right Speech occurs.
- In one of Right Speech, Right Action occurs.
- In one of Right Action, Right Livelihood occurs.
- In one of Right Livelihood, Right Effort occurs.
- In one of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness occurs.
- In one of Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration occurs.

The Right Concentration that occurs is the Noble Right Concentration by which the semi-skilled trainee (*sekha*), the noble disciple (*Ariya sāvako*) knows and sees Nibbāna.

The first time this Noble Concentration occurs is at stream-entry. Then have we achieved initial, ineradicable purification of view, which means we now have unshakeable faith in The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha (doubt has been destroyed), we have unshakeable faith in the law of kamma (adherence to rule&rite has been destroyed), and we no longer believe that there is such a thing as an impermanent/permanent self (identity view has been destroyed). Then is our Right View what The Buddha calls Noble (*Ariyā*), taintless (*anāsavā*), supramundane (*lokuttarā*), a factor of the path (*magg-aṅgā*). He explains:

**In one whose mind is noble (*Ariya-cittassa*), whose mind is taintless (*anāsava-cittassa*), who possesses the Noble Path (*Ariya-Magga-samaṅgino*), who is developing the Noble Path (*Ariya-Maggaṃ bhāvyayato*), wisdom (*paññā*), the faculty of wisdom (*paññ-indriyaṃ*), the power of wisdom (*paññā-balaṃ*), the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor (*dhamma-vicaya sambodhihaṅgo*), the path factor of Right View (*sammā-ditṭhi magg-aṅgaṃ*), is Right View that is Noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the Path.**

<sup>46</sup> For Nibbāna in 'beautiful' Nature, please see also above, p.158.

<sup>47</sup> This is discussed above. Please see footnote 48, p.206.

<sup>48</sup> Here, the author mentioned that these considerations were why there had been seven talks on Nibbāna: our view of Nibbāna is our view of the Path to Nibbāna.

<sup>49</sup> KNOWLEDGE: This is the three knowledges (*tevijjā*) of arahantship. Please see above, p.6. The Buddha explains: 'And beyond this there is no further development of knowledge and conduct that is higher or more perfect.' D.i.3 '*Ambaṭṭha-Suttaṃ*' (Ambaṭṭha is the Brahmin student who asks The Buddha to explain knowledge and conduct (*vijjā-carāṇa*).)



Even though we are then a Noble One, we are still **developing the Noble Path**; we still need to go to the end of the path, to attain arahantship, to become an adept (*arahant*), in need of no further training, whose path is tenfold. The Buddha explains:<sup>50</sup>

☉ In one of Right Concentration, Right Knowledge (*Sammā Ñāṇaṃ*) occurs.

☉ In one of Right Knowledge, Right Liberation (*Sammā Vimutti*) occurs.

Thus, bhikkhus, the semi-skilled trainee possesses eight factors, the arahant ten factors.

With the Noble Eightfold Path as condition, we have become a Noble One, and are what The Buddha calls a true man (*sappurisa*).<sup>51</sup> The man more true than the true man (*sappurisenā sappurisataro*) is, of course, the arahant: he has done what had to be done, has become a non-trainee (*asekha*), has developed the Noble Eightfold Path to the full, has emulated his Teacher The Buddha in the highest way: he is possessed of absolute wisdom, absolute discrimination, and has reached the absolute Highest.

Of the arahant, The Buddha says:<sup>52</sup>

**Of profound knowledge** (*gambhīra-paññaṃ*), **wise** (*medhāvīṃ*) **in the path and non-path skilled** (*magg-āmaggassa kovidāṃ*),<sup>53</sup> **having reached the absolute goal** (*uttam-atthaman-uppattāṃ*), **him do I call a holy man.**

Thank you.

<sup>50</sup> M.III.ii.7 'Mahā-Cattārīsaka-Suttaṃ' ('Great Forty Sutta') Analysis from Vis.i PoP.61ff.

<sup>51</sup> S.V.I.iii.5 'Paṭhama A·Sa·Ppurisa-Suttaṃ' ('First Untrue Man Sutta')

<sup>52</sup> D.xx6 .21 'Brahmaṇa Vagga' ('Holy Man Chapter')

<sup>53</sup> For details in discriminating between these two paths, please see also Vis.xx 'Magg-Amagga Ñāṇa-Dassana Visuddhi Niddeso' ('Path and Not Path Knowledge&Vision Purification Explanation')

## KNOCKING AT THE RIGHT DOOR

Today's talk is about the first factor of the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Aṭṭh-aṅgika Magga*) that leads to Nibbāna: Right View (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*).<sup>1</sup>

The Buddha calls Right View the forerunner (*pubbaṅ-gamaṃ*):<sup>2</sup>

**Of the sunrise, bhikkhus, this is the forerunner (*pubbaṅ-gamaṃ*), this is the foretoken (*pubba-nimittaṃ*),<sup>3</sup> namely, the rise of dawn.**

**So too, bhikkhus, for the wholesome things (*kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ*) this is the forerunner, this is the foretoken, namely, Right View (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*).**

[1] **With Right View, bhikkhus, Right Will occurs (*Sammā Saṅkappa*);**

[2] **with Right Will, Right Speech occurs (*Sammā Vācā*);**

[3] **with Right Speech, Right Action occurs (*Sammā Kammanta*);**

[4] **with Right Action, Right Livelihood occurs (*Sammā Ājīva*);**

[5] **with Right Livelihood, Right Effort occurs (*Sammā Vāyāma*);**

[6] **with Right Effort, Right Mindfulness occurs (*Sammā Sati*);**

[7] **with Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration occurs (*Sammā Samādhi*);**

[8] **with Right Concentration, Right Knowledge occurs (*Sammā Ñāṇaṃ*);**

[9] **with Right Knowledge,**

[10] **Right Liberation occurs (*Sammā Vimutti*).**

We cannot demand Right Knowledge and Right Liberation as a human right, for they are the arahant's prerogative:<sup>4</sup> only he is no longer reborn, only he has escaped suffering, and only his forerunner is perfect Right View. When wrong view is the forerunner, however, we end up with wrong knowledge, even wrong liberation: we think we have entered through the door to the Deathless (the right door), whereas all we have done is enter through the door to continued death and rebirth, even in hell (the wrong door).

Thus, where and whether we are reborn depends on the view that foreruns our kamma (of body, speech and mind). The Buddha knows this with His arahant's knowledge of the divine eye (*dibba cakkhu*):<sup>5</sup>

**I understand how beings pass on according to their kamma thus:**

**'These beings who conducted themselves well in body, speech and mind, who did not revile noble ones, held Right View, and undertook kamma based on Right View, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have been reborn in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.**

**'But these beings who conducted themselves badly in body, speech and mind, who reviled noble ones, held wrong view, and undertook kamma based on wrong view, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have been reborn in the realm of ghosts... in the realm of animals... even in hell.'**

There is, however, wrong view and wrong view: with one kind of wrong view we knock on the door to unhappy rebirths, with another, we do not. The wrong

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<sup>1</sup> This talk was prepared by the author as the second in a series of talks on the Noble Eightfold Path, the Fourth Noble Truth, but the talk was never delivered.

<sup>2</sup> A.X.III.ii.9 'Pubbaṅgama-Suttaṃ' ('Forerunner Sutta')

<sup>3</sup> FORETOKEN: 'a token or sign beforehand [CTCD]' *pubba* (fore) *nimitta* (sign)

<sup>4</sup> PREROGATIVE: If something is the prerogative of a particular person or group, it is a privilege or a power that only they have. □ *Constitutional changes are exclusively the prerogative of the parliament.... It is your prerogative to stop seeing that therapist and find another one.* (CCED)

<sup>5</sup> For The Buddha's ability to see how beings are reborn, please see above, p.29. This passage quoted also above, p.100. (M.III.iii.10 'Deva-Dūta-Suttaṃ' ('Divine Messengers Sutta'))

view of self does not as such open the door to an unhappy rebirth. We may make much merit while possessed of that view, and open the door to rebirth in the deva-realm, with that wrong view, we may even aspire for and gain a happy rebirth. Indeed, it is owing to the wrong view of self that we may aspire to become a Buddha in a future life sometime in the distant future. In so far as our aspiration is accompanied by proper practice of the threefold training (morality, concentration and wisdom), we may gain happy rebirths. If, however, our aspiration for Buddhahood is accompanied by wrong view about what a Buddha is and is not, or wrong view about what is required to become a Buddha, of course, that wrong view may indeed be a knocking at the door to unhappy rebirths.

Knocking at the door to unhappy rebirths is holding the kind of view that either denies the law of kamma, or some aspect of the law of kamma. And it is not uncommon for us to adhere to a such wrong view without realizing it, without realizing that it is of its very nature incompatible with Right View, the Dhamma. We shall therefore look at some of the prevailing ~~modern~~ wrong views as they were described by The Buddha over two thousand years ago.

The Buddha describes a fundamental wrong view<sup>6</sup> which posits that there is no such thing as good and bad kamma, no *kamma-vipāka*, no result from giving, no life before and after this (no rebirth in different worlds), and no Buddhas and other arahants who know and see.<sup>7</sup> This wrong view posits that the only ultimate realities are matter and space:

**Fools and the wise are alike cut off and perish... after death they do not exist.**

This is the materialist view, which posits that our self is annihilated at death. This wrong view is the mother of ~~modern~~ orthodoxy and ~~modern~~ science. The door leading to the cessation of suffering according to this wrong view was, for example, the now defunct socialism/communism,<sup>8</sup> and her ever more prodigious<sup>9</sup> and prolific<sup>10</sup> twin sister capitalism,<sup>11</sup> whose children include indus-

<sup>6</sup> S.III.III.i.5 ‘*N-Atthi-Dinna-Suttaṃ*’ (‘There Is Not Sutta’) and sub/commentary. In D.i.2 ‘*Sāmañña-Phala-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Asceticism Fruit Sutta’), it is attributed to a contemporary of The Buddha, Ajita Kesakambala.

<sup>7</sup> This view is mentioned also above, p.52.

<sup>8</sup> SOCIALISM: a political and economic theory advocating that a country’s land, transport, natural resources and chief industries should be owned and controlled by the whole community or by the State, and that wealth should be equally distributed... policy or practice based on this theory: *the struggle to build socialism* ○ *combine the best features of socialism and capitalism*. COMMUNISM: social and economic system in which there is no private ownership and the means of production belong to all members of society (OALD)

<sup>9</sup> PRODIGIOUS: Something that is prodigious is very large or impressive. □ *This business generates cash in prodigious amounts.... He impressed all who met him with his prodigious memory.* (CCED)

<sup>10</sup> PROLIFIC: ...An animal, person, or plant that is prolific produces a large number of babies, young plants or fruit. □ *They are prolific breeders, with many hens laying up to six eggs. ...a prolific crop of creamy gold coloured pods.* (CCED)

<sup>11</sup> CAPITALISM: ‘an economic, political and social system based on private ownership of property, business and industry, and directed towards making the greatest possible profits for successful organizations and people • *Capitalism is also based upon free exchange of goods and services in the world market* [CIDE] ‘□ *...the two fundamentally opposed social systems, capitalism and*

trialism<sup>12</sup> (so-called ‘progress and development’)<sup>13</sup> mass-culture and consumerism, technocracy and techno-theism,<sup>14</sup> and control of the elected assemblies and educational institutions by the high priests of commerce and industry: technocrats, economists and shopkeepers. Hence, this wrong view is dinned into pupils in schools all over the world, as the subjects science and economics.<sup>15</sup> And owing to this wrong view, manufacturing and shopkeeping, the design and making of machinery and factories, roads and sewers, etc. have entered the doors of academia as ‘finance&management’, ‘business&marketing’, and ‘chemical-’, ‘electrical-’, ‘civil-’, ‘computer-engineering’, etc., the pinnacles of modern human enterprise. This degeneration of values has manifested also as the phenomenon of high-class things and practices now being described by what was formerly considered low-class terms, for example, on airlines now they speak of ‘business’- class, and in advertising a luring word is ‘executive’-lifestyle, and the businessman perceived as the modern ‘knight’ is everywhere in advertising.

The materialist view denies good and bad kamma and *kamma-vipāka* on the premise that there is only matter, but the Buddha describes also a wrong view<sup>16</sup> which denies kamma and *kamma-vipāka* on the premise that our self is impervious<sup>17</sup> and eternal, meaning that good and bad are only concepts. Manifestations of this ancient wrong view are the deceptively profound dogmas which posit that everything is empty, Nibbāna and *saṃsāra* are the same, the enlightened one has transcended all dualities, etc.

This wrong view is also the mother of modern academic orthodoxy, which says good and bad courses of kamma are relative to cultural, religious, psychological, economic, historical, geographical, and political criteria, etc. This wrong view is also dinned into pupils in schools all over the world as the so-called social sciences:<sup>18</sup> psychology,<sup>19</sup> sociology,<sup>20</sup> and history, etc. Their door to

*socialism*. [CCED]’ [With materialism as view, capitalism and socialism are fundamentally opposed, with Right View, they are fundamentally the same.]

<sup>12</sup> INDUSTRIALISM: ‘the idea or state of having a country’s economy, society or political system based on industry. [CIDE]’ ‘the state of having an economy based on industry. Industry is the work and processes involved in collecting raw materials, and making them into products in factories. □ *British industry suffers through insufficient investment in research. ...in countries where industry is developing rapidly.* [CCED]’

<sup>13</sup> Further to the materialist view of ‘progress and development’, please see above, p.58.

<sup>14</sup> TECHNOTHEISM: (Greek *technē*, art, as in TECHNOLOGY/ *theos* God) deification of technology

<sup>15</sup> ECONOMICS: ‘science of principles of the production, distribution and consumption of goods especially with reference to cost [OALD]’ ‘the study of the way in which money, industry, and trade are organized in a society. □ *He gained a first class Honours degree in economics.*

[CCED]’ ‘the scientific study of the system by which a country’s wealth is made and used: *The London School of Economics o She’s in her third year of economics at York University.* [CIDE]’

<sup>16</sup> S.III.III.i.6 ‘*Karoto-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Doing Sutta’), and sub/commentary. In D.i.2 ‘*Sāmañña-Phala-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Asceticism Fruit Sutta’), it is attributed to a contemporary of The Buddha, Purāṇa Kassapa.

<sup>17</sup> IMPERVIOUS: not allowing water, gas, etc. to pass through: *This material is impervious to rain-water. ...not affected or influenced by something....* (OALD)

<sup>18</sup> SOCIAL SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES: ‘group of subjects concerned with people within society and including economics, sociology, politics, and geography: *Social anthropology is one of the social sciences.* [OALD]’ ‘in Britain, social studies is a subject that is taught in schools and colleges,

the cessation of suffering is the same as the materialist door, which is why they lend ‘scientific’ credence<sup>21</sup> to the view that modern government of self and society leads to happiness. The theology for this wrong view is:

- ✗ that morality is unhealthy: the wrong view of modern psychology/psychotherapy: the grandfather being the Austrian Herr Sigmund Freud.<sup>22</sup>
- ✗ that morality is arbitrary: the wrong view of the behavioural sciences, such as sociology, anthropology,<sup>23</sup> ethnology<sup>24</sup>, etc.: the grandfather being the French M. Auguste Comte, and his sons the German Herr Friedrich Engels, Herr Karl Marx, and Herr Max Weber.<sup>25</sup>
- ✗ that morality leads to poverty, as it is bad for the GNP: the wrong view of economics, in which wealth is measured in only material property:<sup>26</sup> the father being the Scottish Mr Adam Smith misread.<sup>27</sup>

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and includes sociology, politics, and economics. [CCED]’

<sup>19</sup> PSYCHOLOGY: ‘scientific study of the human mind and the reasons for people’s behaviour. □ ...Professor of Psychology at Bedford College. [CCED]’ ‘industrial psychology [OALD]’

<sup>20</sup> SOCIOLOGY: scientific study of the nature and development of society and social behaviour [OALD] ‘□ *Psychological and sociological studies were emphasizing the importance of the family.* [CCED]’ ‘*He specializes in the sociology of education/medicine/law/the family.... Sociologists disagree about whether sociology is a science or not.* [CIDE]’

<sup>21</sup> LEND CREDENCE TO SOMETHING: make something become more believable (OALD)

<sup>22</sup> SIGMUND FREUD (1856-1939): Austrian neurologist and psychotherapist: He was the first to emphasize the significance of unconscious processes in normal and neurotic behaviour, and was the founder of psychoanalysis as both a theory of personality and a therapeutic practice. He proposed the existence of an unconscious element in the mind which influences consciousness, and of conflicts between various sets of forces. Freud also state the importance of a child’s semiconsciousness of sex as a factor in mental development, his theory of the sexual origin of neuroses aroused great controversy. (NODE)

<sup>23</sup> ANTHROPOLOGY: study of mankind, especially of its origins, development, customs and beliefs. (OALD)

<sup>24</sup> ETHNOLOGY: ‘science of the different human races, their characteristics, relations to one another, etc. [OALD]’ ‘cultural anthropology [CTCD]’

<sup>25</sup> MAX WEBER (1864-1920): German economist and sociologist, regarded as one of the founders of modern sociology. Notable works: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904), and *Economy and Society* (1922). (NODE)

<sup>26</sup> This modern wrong view is mentioned in the ancient commentator manual *The Guide-Treatise (Netti-Ppakaranam* § 648): ‘With cognizance distorted through having no acquaintance with the pleasure of peace, they [those with wrong view of self-torment as the way or sensual indulgence as the way] made such pronouncements as ‘There is no pleasure [arrived at] through pleasure: pleasure is to be arrived at through pain’, and ‘He who cultivates sensual desires enriches the world; he who enriches the world lays by much merit’. So perceiving, and with such views, aspiring to pleasure through pain, perceiving merit in sensual desires, they abide devoted to the pursuit of self-torment, and devoted to the pursuit of indulging sensual pleasure.’

<sup>27</sup> ADAM SMITH (1723-90): Scottish economist and philosopher. Often regarded as the founder of modern economics, he advocated minimal state interference in economic matters and discredited mercantilism [government regulated commerce]. Notable works: *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) (NODE) What is never mentioned (because morality is not part of the economics curriculum) is that morality permeates Adam Smith’s work, incl. criticism of what he calls ‘the masters of mankind’ (captains of industry) in their foreign and domestic policies. For example, he says: ‘All for ourselves and nothing for other people, seems, in every age of the world, to have been the vile maxim of the masters of mankind.’

Hence, modern orthodoxy posits that morality (control of the three doors of kamma: body, speech, and mind) should be ‘developed’, ‘modernized,’ just as technology is developed: the dogma is ‘liberation’ of the true, free, untrammelled<sup>28</sup> self. The modern arahant is thus the ‘liberal’, progressive, democratic, national-productive, consumerist man, woman and child ‘liberated’ from ideas, ethics, education, and politics that might restrain their conduct, that might make them discriminate between bad and good, between excess and moderation, between shameful and shameless, and between superior and inferior, etc.: the modern arahant is liberated from a sense both of proportion and propriety.

Likewise, modern ‘Buddhists’ liberate The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha from what are seen as the narrow historical, monastic confines<sup>29</sup> of orthodoxy (the shackles of morality, concentration and wisdom), and the Triple Gem is modernized so as to comply with modern dogmas about equality and freedom:

- ✗ everyone becomes Buddha,
- ✗ everything becomes Dhamma,
- ✗ everyone is a member of the Sangha.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, should one dare speak out against, for example, the degeneracy of modern education, the torture of animals in laboratories, the slaughter of babies in the womb (unproductive members of society), the killing of the old and sick in hospitals (unproductive members of society), or dishonesty/ venereal misconduct in a prominent democratically elected personage, or an idol of the screen or sports-field, one is considered hateful, and the doors to freedom of speech in the media and parliament are closed, for one is dismissed as a hysterical reactionary.<sup>31</sup> Bhikkhus who observe the Vinaya and practise and teach the True Dhamma (*Sa-Ddhamma*) are thus reviled as ‘tradition-bound’, ‘extreme’, ‘sexist,’ and ‘boring’.

The Buddha describes also the view that is conjoined with these wrong views: the wrong view<sup>32</sup> which posits that the door to Nibbāna is fivefold, namely as pleasure through the five doors (*pañca-dvāra*): eye door, ear door, nose door, tongue door, and body door. If this view did not exist, there would not be the materialist view, nor the view that good and bad are relative, for those views would

<sup>28</sup> UNTRAMMELLED: ‘Someone who is untrammelled is able to act freely in the way they want to, rather than being restricted by something. □ ...*the only place where the royal family could really relax and lead an untrammelled domestic life... She thought of herself as a free woman, untrammelled by family relationships* [CCED].’ ‘not limited by rules or any other controlling influence... *He’s very sceptical about the notion of untrammelled free enterprise.*’ (CIDE) TRAMMEL: ‘(usually plural) hampering influence, restraint imposed by something, (*the trammels of etiquette, routine.*) [POD]’ ‘*the trammels of routine, convention, superstition* [OALD].’

<sup>29</sup> CONFINES: ‘The confines of a situation, system, or activity are the limits or restrictions it involves. □ ...*away from the confines of the British class system... I can’t stand the confines of this marriage* [CCED].’

<sup>30</sup> Please see this also mentioned above, in connection with views-clinging, p.53.

<sup>31</sup> REACTIONARY: ‘(person) opposing (especially political) progress and reform [OALD]’ ‘□ *Critics viewed him as a reactionary, even a monarchist* [CCED].’

<sup>32</sup> D.i.1 ‘*Brahma-Jāla-Suttam*’ (‘Supreme Net Sutta’)

then serve no purpose. The purpose they serve is namely the modern dogma of ‘the right to pursue happiness’, the dogma of consumerism through the six doors, the view of discontent, and the conceit of human rights. This is also the view that gives rise to the confusion that is social-democracy, wanting to have absolute social justice through legislation, and at the same time enjoying privilege, property and pleasure.

When we hold this view very strongly, as is done in the most sensually developed societies, we will as a matter of course get angry when we hear The Buddha explain the Noble Truth of Suffering: not because it conflicts with our experience, but because it conflicts with our view.<sup>33</sup>

The wrong view of Nibbāna through the five doors is also why almost all modern Buddhists cannot conceive of keeping the eight precepts proper, and why many cannot keep the fifth precept: liquor is considered indispensable to modern, progressive human happiness. A sign of progress is hoarding with images of the idealized West, of the idealized Westerners, indecently dressed, drinking expensive Western booze.<sup>34</sup>

The Buddha describes also the more primitive wrong view<sup>35</sup> which posits that our birth, etc. is fortuitous,<sup>36</sup> and that at death we are no more. This view is the annihilation view that we meet in modern science: when the rationalist modern scientist is lost, he speaks of ‘chance’, ‘random/freak occurrence’, etc. Thus, in his order of the world (cosmos),<sup>37</sup> the modern scientist includes disorder (chaos),<sup>38</sup> which means his scientific order is neither scientific nor ordered. Modern medicine’s continued authority in the modern world depends on this view of disordered order.

The Buddha describes also the idealistic wrong view<sup>39</sup> which posits<sup>40</sup> that our world is only a reflection of an ultimate, hidden, archetypal, ideal, transcendental reality. This view is an eternity view that has in European philosophy manifested as, for example, the ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras’s scheme of heavenly numbers,<sup>41</sup> the ancient Greek philosopher Plato’s ideas,<sup>42</sup> and the

<sup>33</sup> For The Buddha’s explanation, please see quotation below, regarding Brahmins and ascetics who are speculators, p.258.

<sup>34</sup> This sensualist view is discussed also above, p. 52.

<sup>35</sup> S.III.III.i.4 ‘*No-Ca-M-Esi-Yā-Suttam*’ (‘Might Not Be for Me Sutta’)

<sup>36</sup> FORTUITOUS: Due to chance, casual. FORTUITISM, FORTUITIST belief, believer, in chance, not design, as causing adaptations in nature; FORTUITY [L. *fors* chance] (POD)

<sup>37</sup> COSMOS: The ordered universe; ordered system of ideas &c., order as opp. *chaos*. (POD)

<sup>38</sup> CHAOS: utter confusion. CHAOTIC utterly without order or arrangement. [Greek] (POD)

<sup>39</sup> S.III.III.i.1 ‘*Vāta-Suttam*’ (‘Wind Sutta’), and commentary.

<sup>40</sup> POSIT: If you posit something, you suggest or assume it as the basis for an argument or calculation. □ *Several writers have posited the idea of a universal consciousness... Callahan goes further, positing that chemical elements radiate electromagnetic signals.* (CCED)

<sup>41</sup> PYTHAGORAS (c.580-500 B.C.): Greek philosopher... sought to interpret the entire physical world in terms of numbers, and founded their systematic and mystical study... (NODE)

<sup>42</sup> PLATO (c.429-347 BC): ‘Greek philosopher: A disciple of Socrates and the teacher of Aristotle, he founded the Academy in Athens. An integral part of his thought is the theory of ‘ideas’ or ‘forms’, in which abstract entities or UNIVERSALS are contrasted with their objects or PARTICULARS in the material world. [NODE]’ IDEA ‘archetype, pattern, esp. (Platonic) eternally existing pattern

modern Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung's<sup>43</sup> philosophy of archetypes.<sup>44</sup>

The Buddha describes also the wrong view<sup>45</sup> which posits that self and the world are in essence the same, and that at death we become one with the eternal world. This view is also an eternity view, with many manifestations, for example, the idea of our returning to a primordial essence, a world soul, universal consciousness, original mind, one mind, divine essence, divine ghost, spirit, Buddha nature, Buddha mind, etc.<sup>46</sup>

The Buddha describes also the wrong view<sup>47</sup> which posits that we are victims entirely of fate, that we are without free will, without power or effort, that we can learn nothing from others, that everything and anything that happens to us, wherever we are born, however we are born, happens spontaneously, owing to destiny and nature (wrong view of biology and chemistry, where even the workings of the mind are considered to be materially originated, meaning that they can be measured with technology). Although this wrong view does not explicitly deny kamma and *kamma-vipāka*, it comes to the same thing, for it denies that there is volition (*cetanā*), will (*saṅkappa*), and effort (*vāyāma*). This wrong view manifests, for example, as resignation with regard to training in morality, concentration and wisdom: 'It's my kamma: I can't help it! I don't have enough *pāramī!*'

The Buddha describes also the more sentimental wrong view<sup>48</sup> of fate which posits that the only ultimate realities are matter, pleasure, pain and the soul. This wrong view posits that things are not formed by any conditions, not even by a god, but are preordained, fixed in order and number like immovable mountains. Thus, this wrong view posits that one cannot kill a being, for the sword merely cuts in between the ultimate realities, and the being's death was pre-determined. This wrong view posits that whether we are foolish or wise, our run-

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of which individual things are imperfect copies [POD].', 'an archetype of the manifold varieties of existence in the universe, belonging to the supersensible world, where reality is found and where God is (*Plato*). [CTCD].'

<sup>43</sup> JUNG CARL GUSTAV (1875-1961): 'Swiss psychologist: ...originated the concept of introvert and extrovert personality, and of the four psychological functions of sensation, intuition, thinking, and feeling. He collaborated with Sigmund Freud in developing the psychoanalytic theory of personality, but later disassociated himself from Freud's preoccupation with sexuality as the determinant of personality, preferring to emphasize a mystical or religious factor in the unconscious. archetype (in Jungian theory) a primitive mental image inherited from the earliest human ancestors, and supposed to be present in the collective unconscious. [NODE]' 'In Jungian theory, there are certain archetypes of human personality. [CIDE]'

<sup>44</sup> Here, the author mentioned that without doubt one may find similar manifestations of these wrong views in Chinese philosophy: whatever else one would like to think, ignorance and wrong view are not geographically determined.

<sup>45</sup> S.III.III.i.3 'So-Attā-Suttaṃ' ('That Self Sutta')

<sup>46</sup> The eternity view is discussed also above, under the four kinds of clinging, p.50.

<sup>47</sup> S.III.III.i.7 'Hetu-Suttaṃ' ('Cause Sutta'), and sub/commentary. In D.i.2 'Sāmañña-Phala-Suttaṃ' ('Asceticism Fruit Sutta'), it is attributed to a contemporary of The Buddha, Makkhali Gosala. Of him, The Buddha says: 'I am not, bhikkhus, aware of any one person who practises for the many's harm, for the many's unhappiness, for the many's ill, for Sāmaññaharm, and suffering of devas and men as does, bhikkhus, that useless man Makkhali (*Makkhali mogha-puriso*).' A.I.XVI.iii 'Eka-Dhamma Pāḷi: Tatiya Vaggo' ('One Thing Text: Third Chapter').

<sup>48</sup> S.III.III.i.8 'Mahā-Diṭṭhi-Suttaṃ' ('Great View Sutta') In D.i.2 'Sāmañña-Phala-Suttaṃ' ('Asceticism Fruit Sutta'), it is attributed to a contemporary of The Buddha, Pakudha Kaccāyana.



ning on in *samsāra* are limited, for the events of our lives follow one after the other in fixed order. This wrong view says that just as a ball of string is eventually unwound, so do we eventually and inevitably enter the door to the Deathless. This wrong view manifests, for example, as the view that we are all as a matter of course knocking at the door to the Deathless, whatever our kamma.<sup>49</sup>

The Buddha describes many more views, such as the view which posits that the workings of kamma and *kamma-vipāka* are a god's work. Since such a view does not deny causality, it can bring happy rebirths, even in heaven.<sup>50</sup> If, however, we believe that we by rule&rite can make the god 'forgive' us our evil, and believe that we thereby may gain eternal life in heaven, clearly we believe the workings of kamma can by ritual be made null and void, which comes to the same thing as denying kamma. The Buddha explains that there are in total sixty-two wrong views, and He explains that they arise owing either to pure metaphysics, or (in most cases) metaphysics born of profound meditation that is not only insufficiently profound, but also profoundly misunderstood.<sup>51</sup>

The Buddha explains the origin for all these metaphysics:<sup>52</sup>

**When there is matter, bhikkhus, by clinging to matter [sensation, perception, formations, and consciousness] ... such a view arises....<sup>53</sup>**

Clinging to the five aggregates<sup>54</sup> is the belief in self (*atta-vāda*), believing that one has a self that is somehow or other connected to the five aggregates: wrong view arises always owing to the belief in self.<sup>55</sup>

Hence, to the Venerable Kaccāna, the Buddha explains that all the wrong

<sup>49</sup> Here, the author mentioned that The Buddha does indeed speak of a fixed destination in Nibbāna, but only for the one who has entered upon the Noble Eightfold Path, the Noble One (*ariya*): 'When, bhikkhus, a noble disciple has abandoned perplexity about suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the way leading to the cessation of suffering, he is then called a noble disciple who is a stream-enterer, no longer bound to the nether world, fixed in destiny, with enlightenment as his destination.' (S.III.III.i 'Sot-Āpatti Vaggo' ('Stream-Entry Chapter'))

<sup>50</sup> The Buddha explains to Vacchagotta the wanderer: 'When I recollect the past ninety-one aeons, Vaccha, I do not recall any Ājīvaka [member of fatalist sect of ascetics] who, on the dissolution of the body went to heaven, with one exception, and he held the doctrine of kamma (*kamma-vādī*), the doctrine of action (*kiriya-vādī*).' (M.II.iii.1 'Te-Vijja Vacchagotta-Suttaṃ' ('Threefold Knowledge Vacchagotta Sutta')) Please see also The Buddha's explanation regarding meritorious training in morality and concentration that takes place independently of a Buddha's Teaching, above, footnote 31, p.47.

<sup>51</sup> The Buddha explains: 'These are the sixty-two ways in which those ascetics and Brahmins who are speculators about the past, the future or both, put forward views about these. There is no other way.' D.i.1 'Brahma-Jāla-Suttaṃ' ('Supreme Net Sutta')

<sup>52</sup> S.III.III.i 'Sotāpatti Vaggo' ('Stream-Entry Chapter')

<sup>53</sup> These metaphysics are views clinging (*ditṭh-upādāna*), one of the four kinds of clinging, discussed above, p.50.

<sup>54</sup> For clinging to the five aggregates, please see also above, p.30ff.

<sup>55</sup> Also the Venerable arahant Isidatta explains: 'As to the various views that arise in the world, householder, "The world is eternal" or "The world is not eternal" ... as well as the sixty-two metaphysics mentioned in the "Supreme Net Sutta" (*Brahma-Jāla-Suttaṃ*): when there is identity view, these views come to be; when there is no identity view, these views do not come to be.' (S.IV.vii.3 'Dutiya Isidatta-Suttaṃ' ('Second Isidatta Sutta'))

views can be grouped into two:<sup>56</sup>

**The world for the most part, Kaccāna, depends upon two: existence (*atthitā*) and also non-existence (*n-atthitā*).**

The Buddha says the world for the most part, because noble ones (*ariya*) do not depend on any view. By existence, The Buddha means the eternity view, arising from craving to come into existence (*bhāva taṇhā*), craving for an eternal self (lust). By non-existence, He means the annihilation view, arising from craving to go out of existence (*vi-bhāva taṇhā*), craving for cessation of self (lust/greed).<sup>57</sup>

The Buddha explains further: **'All exists' (*sabbaṃ atthi*), Kaccāna, this is one extreme.**

In other words, it is an illusion to view all things as ultimately existing: human beings and animals, men and women, parents and children, trees and flowers, countries and continents, Princess Matilda and the World Champion in go-karting, me and you, etc. It is because we think these concepts have ultimate existence that we perform kamma. For example, we may see a beaming little child and think: 'What a sweet little child!' That is *akusala* kamma of the mind door, born of lust and delusion that has arisen because we think the sweet child exists. Then the child falls over and becomes a screaming little child, and we get upset and think: 'Oooh! Poor little child!' That is *akusala* kamma of the mind door, born of hatred and delusion that has arisen because we think the poor child exists (and the screaming child certainly thinks so too). The kamma is intention (*cetanā*), which is a mental factor (*cetasika*) associated with the consciousnesses (*viññāṇa*) by which we think, speak and act: consciousnesses and their mental factors have ultimate existence, for they are mind (*nāma*). Mind can in this world not exist alone, but exists always together with matter (*rūpa*), as mind-matter (*nāma-rūpa*). Beaming and screaming children have no ultimate existence: mind-matter does.

That is namely the other extreme: the view which posits that absolutely everything is concepts, that nothing at all has ultimate existence. The Buddha explains: **'All does not exist' (*sabbaṃ natthi*), this is the second extreme.**

In other words, it is an illusion to view all things as an illusion: it is an illusion to view the world as completely empty.

Absolutely all things are empty of self (*atta*), yes. The Buddha explains:<sup>58</sup>

**All things are without self (*sabbe dhammā anattā*).**

Absolutely all things are empty of existence, no. The Buddha explains that there are two ultimate realities, two elements:<sup>59</sup>

**There are, Ānanda, these two elements: the formed element (*saṅkhatā-dhātu*), the Unformed element (*A-saṅkhatā-dhātu*).**

**When he knows and sees these two elements, a bhikkhu can be called skilled in the elements (*dhātu-kusalo*).**

<sup>56</sup> S.II.I.ii.5 '*Kaccānagotta-Suttam*' (The Buddha is speaking to the Venerable Kaccānagotta)

<sup>57</sup> Please see the commentary to this sutta. The two kinds of craving are discussed above, p.57ff.

<sup>58</sup> Dhp.xx.7 '*Magga Vagga*' ('Path Chapter')

<sup>59</sup> M.III.ii.5 '*Bahu-Dhātuka-Suttam*' ('Many Kinds of Element Sutta'). Further to the two elements, please see The Buddha's explanation below, footnote 10, p. 67.

When The Buddha says element (*dhātu*), He is referring to ultimate realities: elements that cannot be reduced any further. The two elements may thus be seen as four ultimate realities,<sup>60</sup> because the formed element comprises the threefold formations (*saṅkhārā*): consciousness (*viññāṇa*), mental factors (*cetasika*), matter, (*rūpa*).

The fourth ultimate reality is the Unformed element, Nibbāna.<sup>61</sup>

The Buddha discusses the formed element:

**Without going to either of these extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma by the middle:**

- **Ignorance is the condition for formation** (*avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā*),
- **formation is the condition for consciousness** (*saṅkhāra-paccayā viññāṇam*),
- **consciousness is the condition for mind-matter** (*viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpam*),
- **mind-matter is the condition for the six bases** (*nāma-rūpa-paccayā saḷ-āyatanaṃ*),
- **the six bases are the condition for contact** (*saḷ-āyatana-paccayā phasso*),
- **contact is the condition for sensation** (*phassa-paccayā vedanā*),
- **sensation is the condition for craving** (*vedanā-paccayā taṇhā*),
- **craving is the condition for clinging** (*taṇhā-paccayā upādānam*),
- **clinging is the condition for coming-into-existence** (*upādāna-paccayā bhava*),
- **coming-into-existence is the condition for birth** (*bhava-paccayā jāti*),
- **birth is the condition for** (*jāti-paccayā*), **ageing&death** (*jarā-maraṇam*), **sorrow, lamentation, pain** (*soka, parideva, dukkha*), **grief and despair's arising** (*domanass-upāyāsā sambhavanti*).

**Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering** (*evam-etassa kevalassa dukkha-kkhandhassa samudayo hoti*).

This is the twelve-factored dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*), the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering,<sup>62</sup> which describes the conditions for formations and the forming of formations: the world, the formed element (*saṅkhata-dhātu*).<sup>63</sup> The formed element is formed by conditions, and is the door to birth, ageing&death, which is suffering (*dukkha*), the First Noble Truth.

<sup>60</sup> Ads.I.2 'Catudhā Paramattha' ('Fourfold Ultimate Reality') These four ultimate realities are discussed as the talk progresses.

<sup>61</sup> In the suttas, The Buddha explains multifold reality in multifold ways, according to multifold perspectives and groupings: for example, as the twelfefold dependent origination, the fivefold aggregates, the fourfold Noble Truths, the twofold mind-matter, etc., and here, as the twofold ultimate realities. These many perspectives may for the unlearned appear mutually incompatible, which would regrettably suggest that The Buddha's ordering of reality was disordered. With study and meditation, however, one may come to understand that His explanations are not incompatible, rather that they elucidate one another. In the same way, although the Buddha does not in any sutta explicitly explain ultimate reality as four ultimate realities (He does this in His *Abhidhamma*), one may with advantage explain dependent origination accordingly, because both the *Abhidhamma* and dependent origination describe ultimate realities: they will inevitably agree. For further discussion of this aspect of the Dhamma, please see The Buddha's explanation above, p.26, and below, Appendix IV, 'Is This the Dhamma-Vinaya?', p.281ff.

<sup>62</sup> THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE ORIGIN OF SUFFERING: please see The Buddha's explanation above, p.33.

<sup>63</sup> M.III.ii.5 'Bahu Dhātuka-Suttaṃ' ('Many Kinds of Element Sutta') Here, The Buddha explains all the formations of dependent origination also as elements, and in some cases, He uses a synonymous designation: for example, He enumerates 'the space element (*ākāśadhātu*)', which He usually includes in 'matter derived from the four great elements'. An exception is the sixth external base, the dhamma base, which is not an element because it includes non-elements such as concepts and language. Also, the dhamma base includes Nibbāna, which is its own unformed element. Please see also S.II.III.i 'Nānatta Vaggo' ('Diversity Chapter')

1 The first factor of dependent origination is ignorance (*avijjā*), which is ignorance of the Four Noble Truths, ignorance of dependent origination: the mental factor delusion (*moha*).<sup>64</sup>

2 When there is ignorance, there is also formation (*saṅkhārā*), formation of kamma, the mental factor volition (*cetanā*).<sup>65</sup>

3 When there is formation, there is formation of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) (re-birth consciousness in the human or other realm): consciousness is an ultimate reality formed by kamma performed in a past life: *kamma-vipāka*.<sup>66</sup>

4 When there is consciousness, there is also mind-matter (*nāma-rūpa*): they cannot be separated.<sup>67</sup>

Mind is five mental factors: sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), volition (*cetanā*), contact (*phasso*), attention (*manasikāro*).

Matter is the four great elements (*cattāro ca mahā-bhūtā*): earth element (*pathavī-dhātu*), water element (*āpo-dhātu*), fire element (*tejo-dhātu*), wind element (*vayo-dhātu*).

Matter is also what The Buddha calls matter derived from the four great elements (*catunnaṅga mahā-bhūtānaṃ upādāya-rūpaṃ*): twenty-four elements, such as: colour (*vaṇṇa*), sound (*sadda*), odour (*gandha*), flavour (*rasa*), life faculty (*jīvit-indriya*), male and female sex-materiality (*bhāva-rūpa*), space element (*ākāsa-dhātu*).

5 When there is mind-matter, there are also the six bases (*saḷ-āyatana*), six internal bases (*cha ajjhattika āyatana*):<sup>68</sup> five material internal bases that are made up of transparent matter (*pasāda-rūpa*)<sup>69</sup>

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1) the eye base ( <i>cakkh-āyatanaṃ</i> ) |  | 4) the tongue base ( <i>jivh-āyatanaṃ</i> ) |
| 2) the ear base ( <i>sot-āyatanaṃ</i> )   |  | 5) the body base ( <i>kay-āyatanaṃ</i> )    |
| 3) the nose base ( <i>ghān-āyatanaṃ</i> ) |  |   |

And the sixth, immaterial base:

- 6) the mind base (*man-āyatanaṃ*)

There are then corresponding six external bases (*cha bahirā āyatana*):

- 1) the eye base takes the sight base (*rūp-āyatana*)
- 2) the ear base takes the sound base (*sadd-āyatana*)
- 3) the nose base takes the odour base (*gandh-āyatana*)
- 4) the tongue base takes the flavour base (*ras-āyatana*)
- 5) the body base takes the touch base (*phoṭṭhabb-āyatana*)

These five external bases are matter (*rūpa*). There is also a sixth base:

- 6) The mind base takes the dhamma base (*dhamm-āyatana*)

The dhamma base is all things (*dhammā*): the four ultimate realities (consciousness, mental factors, matter and Nibbāna), as well as the conventional realities

<sup>64</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of ignorance and further analyses, please see above, p.101ff.

<sup>65</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of formation and further analyses, please see above, p.93 ff.

<sup>66</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of consciousness and further analyses, please see above, p.75 ff, and further 'Is and Appears Profound', p.79ff.

<sup>67</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of mind-matter and further analyses, please see above, p.71 ff. For the relationship between consciousness and mind-matter, please see also 'Is and Appears Profound', p.79ff.

<sup>68</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of the six bases and further analyses, please see above, p.70 ff.

<sup>69</sup> Further to the transparent matter, please see above footnote 4, p.79.

of concepts and language.<sup>70</sup>

**6** When an external base strikes upon an internal base, and there is the mental factor attention, there is one of the six kinds of consciousness (*viññāṇa*):

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) eye consciousness ( <i>cakkhu-viññāṇaṃ</i> )        | 4) tongue consciousness ( <i>jivhā-viññāṇaṃ</i> ) |
| 2) ear consciousness ( <i>sota-viññāṇaṃ</i> )          | 5) body consciousness ( <i>kāya-viññāṇaṃ</i> )    |
| 3) <b>nose consciousness</b> ( <i>ghāna-viññāṇaṃ</i> ) | 6) mind consciousness ( <i>mano-viññāṇaṃ</i> ).   |

With these three coming together, there is contact (*phasso*), a mental factor.<sup>71</sup>

**7** When there is contact, there is also the mental factor sensation (*vedanā*):<sup>72</sup> pleasant-sensation (*sukkhā vedanā*), unpleasant-sensation (*dukkhā vedanā*), and neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant sensation. (*adukkhamasukkhā vedanā*).

And here we come to the parting of ways: the fool's way and the wise man's way.<sup>73</sup>

**8** The fool is possessed of ignorance. Hence, when sensation arises in the fool, there is craving (*taṇhā*) (the mental factor lust/greed (*rāga/lobha*): sensual craving (*kāma taṇhā*), craving for beautiful sights, sounds, odours, flavours, touches and dhammas. There may be craving for the sensation to continue (craving to come into existence (*bhava taṇhā*)), the mental factor lust/greed (*rāga/lobha*). There may also be craving for the sensation to cease (craving to go out of existence (*vibhava taṇhā*), also the mental factor lust/greed (*lobha*)).<sup>74</sup>

The arahant's sensation, however, is not conjoined with ignorance. When sensation is not conjoined with ignorance, there is no craving. The arahant goes no further than the sensation. But the fool's sensation, (being conjoined with craving) gives rise to wrong view. The Buddha explains:<sup>75</sup>

**When those ascetics and Brahmins who are speculators about the past (*pubbanta-kappikā*), speculators about the future (*aparanta-kappikā*), speculators about the past and the future (*pubbanta-paranta-kappikā*), proclaim various views on the past and future, concerning the past and future (that upon sixty-two premises have been arrived at by inclination), it is merely the sensation (*vedayitaṃ*), of those who do not know (*a-jānataṃ*), and do not see (*a-passataṃ*); [it is] the apprehension (*paritassita*), and contortion (*vipphandita*), of those possessed of craving (*taṇhā*).**

Views about the past and future arise owing to the mental factor sensation conjoined with craving.

**9** The fool's craving continues and intensifies so that there is clinging (*upādānaṃ*):

- 1) sensual clinging (*kām-upādānaṃ*): clinging to sensations through the six doors: the sensations are mental factors, the clinging is the mental factor lust/greed.

<sup>70</sup> The conventional realities of concepts and language do not exist of themselves, but are formed by the mind. Hence, they are not elements.

<sup>71</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of contact and further analyses, please see above, p.69ff.

<sup>72</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of sensation and further analyses, please see above, p.68ff.

<sup>73</sup> For The Buddha's similar explanation of the fool and the wise man, please see, for example, S.II.I.ii.9 'Bāla-Paṇḍita-Suttaṃ' ('Fool-Wise Man Sutta').

<sup>74</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of craving and further analyses, please see above, p.57 ff.

<sup>75</sup> D.i.1 'Brahma-Jāla-Suttaṃ' ('Supreme Net Sutta')

- 2) views clinging (*diṭṭh-upādānaṃ*): clinging to one of the sixty-two wrong views: the views are the mental factor wrong view, the clinging is the mental factor lust/greed (*lobha*).
- 3) rule&rite clinging (*sīla-bbat-upādānaṃ*): clinging to the wrong view that suffering can be put an end to by observances alone: the view is the mental factor wrong view, the clinging is the mental factor lust/greed (*lobha*).

Finally the mother of all these formations:

- 4) self-belief clinging (*atta-vād-upādānaṃ*): clinging to belief in a self that experiences all these things (either an eternal self or one that is annihilated): the belief is the mental factor wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*), the clinging is the mental factor greed/lust (*lobha*).<sup>76</sup>

**10** When there is clinging, it follows that there is coming-into-existence (*bhava*):

- 1) Kamma coming-into-existence (*kamma-bhava*): formation of kamma, the mental factor volition (*cetanā*).
- 2) Rebirth coming-into-existence (*upapatti-bhava*): formation of kamma-result, the rebirth consciousness and mind-matter, which is birth (*jāti*): the result of past volition, *kamma-vipāka*.<sup>77</sup>

**11** When there is kamma coming-into-existence, it follows that there is knocking at the door to birth (*jāti*).

**12** When there is birth, it follows that there is knocking at the door to ageing&death (*jarā-maraṇaṃ*), for the matter that is the body has an only limited life-span, at the end of which mind-matter break up.<sup>78</sup>

If the mind is conjoined with ignorance and craving, there is the formation of a new rebirth consciousness and mind-matter. And, as this runs on, it follows that in the course of existence there arise:

- the unwholesome mental formation of sorrow (*soka*): the mental factor mental unpleasant sensation, associated with the mental factor hatred (*dosa*).
- the unwholesome verbal formation of lamentation (*parideva*): verbal intimation, which is the striking together of the earth element of the vocal organs, and the earth element of the consciousness-produced matter that is the air by which speech is formed. The striking of these two earth elements issues into the sound of lamentation.<sup>79</sup> The consciousness by which the sound is produced is associated with the mental factor hatred (*dosa*).
- the formation of physical suffering (*dukkha*): the mental factor of bodily unpleasant sensation.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>76</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of clinging and further analyses, please see above, p.50ff.

<sup>77</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of coming-into-existence and further analyses, please see above, p.44ff.

<sup>78</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of ageing&death and further analyses, please see above, p.44ff.

<sup>79</sup> For further details, please see above footnote 34, p.73.

<sup>80</sup> This mental factor is one of the seven universal mental factors, existent in all consciousnesses: hence, an arahant and Buddha can and does experience physical suffering. Please see, for example, S.II.I.ii.9 '*Bāla-Paṇḍita-Suttaṃ*' ('Fool-Wise Man Sutta'), and The Buddha's above explanations, p.71, and p.84.

- the mental formation grief (*domanassa*): the mental factor mental unpleasant sensation, associated with the mental factor hatred (*dosa*).
- the mental formation despair (*upāyāsā*): the mental factor mental unpleasant sensation, associated with the mental factor hatred (*dosa*).

This is how The Buddha explains the origin of the world,<sup>81</sup> *samsāra*, in ultimate terms.

The Buddha explains *samsāra* also in conventional terms:<sup>82</sup>

**It is because of not understanding and not penetrating the Four Noble Truths that you and I have for a long time rushed on (*sandhāvitaṃ*) and run about (*samsaritaṃ*).**

In conventional terms, The Buddha explains also the dependent cessation of *samsāra*:<sup>83</sup>

**Just as, bhikkhus, when the stalk of a bunch of mangoes has been cut, all the mangoes hanging on it go with it, just so the Tathāgata's link with existence has been cut.**

**As long as the body subsists, devas and human beings will see Him. But at the breaking-up of the body, and the exhaustion of the life-span, devas and human beings will see Him no more.**<sup>84</sup>

We can no longer know and see The Buddha except through the door of His Teachings, the Dhamma,<sup>85</sup> because The Buddha has known and seen the Four Noble Truths,<sup>86</sup> in which case, at His death, He enters through the door to the Deathless. The Buddha explains how this takes place:<sup>87</sup>

- ☉ **With ignorance's remainderless fading away and cessation (*avijjāya tveva asesā-virāga-nirodhā*), formation ceases (*saṅkhāra-nirodho*);**
- ☉ **with formation's cessation, consciousness ceases (*saṅkhāra-nirodhā, viññāṇa-nirodho*);**
- ☉ **with consciousness's cessation, mind-matter ceases (*viññāṇa-nirodhā, nāma-rūpa-nirodho*);**
- ☉ **with mind-matter's cessation, the six bases cease (*nāma-rūpa-nirodhā, saḷ-āyatana-nirodho*);**
- ☉ **with the six bases' cessation, contact ceases (*saḷ-āyatana-nirodhā, phassa-nirodho*);**
- ☉ **with contact's cessation, sensation ceases (*phassa-nirodhā, vedanā-nirodho*);**
- ☉ **with sensation's cessation, craving ceases (*vedanā-nirodhā, taṇhā-nirodho*);**
- ☉ **with craving's cessation, clinging ceases (*taṇhā-nirodhā, upādāna-nirodho*);**

<sup>81</sup> The Buddha explains: 'And what, bhikkhus, is the origin of the world (*lokassa samudayo*)? Dependent on the eye and colour, eye consciousness arises [etc.].' (S.II.I.v.4 '*Loka-Suttaṃ*' ('World Sutta')). Please see also below, p.261.

<sup>82</sup> S.V.XII.iii.1 '*Paṭhama-Koṭigāma-Suttaṃ*' ('First Koṭigāma Sutta') Quoted also above, p.102.

<sup>83</sup> D.i.1 '*Brahma-Jāla-Suttaṃ*' ('Supreme Net Sutta')

<sup>84</sup> This may be misconstrued to mean that The Buddha disappears to another reality, a hidden realm or world, etc. Such a view arises from the eternity view, for the arahant is simply not reborn: his consciousness has gone out like a fire that expired. The Buddha explains it to the wanderer Vacchagotta: 'Just as a fire burns with fuel but not without fuel, so, Vaccha, I declare rebirth for one with fuel, not for one without fuel.' (The fuel of rebirth is ignorance and craving). S.IV.I.x.9 '*Kutūhala-Sālā-Suttaṃ*' ('Debating Hall Sutta'). For a more elaborate explanation, please see M.II.iii.2 '*Aggi Vacchagotta-Suttaṃ*' ('Fire Vacchagotta Sutta').

<sup>85</sup> Upon His deathbed, The Buddha explains to the Venerable Ānanda: 'What I have taught and explained to you as Dhamma-Vinaya will, at My passing, be your teacher.' (D.ii.3 '*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta'))

<sup>86</sup> Please see The Buddha's explanation of His enlightenment (conclusion quoted above p.89) in S.V.XII.ii.1 '*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*' ('Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta').

<sup>87</sup> S.II.I.ii.5 '*Kaccānagotta-Suttaṃ*' (The Buddha is speaking to the Venerable Kaccānagotta)

- ☉ **with clinging's cessation, coming-into-existence ceases** (*upādāna-nirodhā, bhava-nirodho*);
- ☉ **with the cessation of coming-into-existence, birth ceases** (*bhava-nirodhā, jāti-nirodho*);
- ☉ **with birth's cessation** (*jāti-nirodhā*), **ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation** (*jarā-maraṇam, soka-parideva-*), **pain, grief and despair cease** (*dukkha-domanass-upāyāsā nirujjhanti*).

**Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering** (*evametassa kevalassa dukkhak-khandhassa nirodho hoti*).

This means that when there is no ignorance and craving, there is no more entering the door to rebirth, consciousness and mind-matter, no more knocking at the door to sorrow, the door to lamentation, the door to physical suffering, the door to grief, and the door to despair. This is how The Buddha explains cessation of the world, closing the door to *samsāra*, in ultimate terms.

Until we have known and seen dependent origination and cessation, we cannot help believing in a self, we cannot help resorting to wrong views: either the wrong view of existence (a permanent self), or non-existence (an impermanent self). When we have known and seen dependent origination, however, the door to such views is closed:

- ☉ **But, Kaccāna, when one sees** (*passato*) **(as it really is** (*yathā-bhūtam*), **with Right Wisdom** (*Samma-Ppaññāya*)) **the origin of the world** (*loka-samudayaṃ*), **there is no non-existence in regard to the world.**
- ☉ **And, Kaccāna, when one sees** (as it really is, with right wisdom) **the cessation of the world** (*loka-nirodham*), **there is no existence in the world.**

When the Buddha speaks of the world, He means formations (*saṅkhārā*), the formed element (*saṅkhatā dhātu*):<sup>88</sup> no other world exists. When we have known and seen dependent origination (suffering and its origin: the First and Second Noble Truths), we will have known and have seen that the world exists owing to conditions (ignorance, the formation of kamma, etc.): hence the door is closed to the annihilation view, the view of a self that ceases. Likewise, when we have known and seen dependent cessation (Nibbāna: the Third Noble Truth), we will have known and seen that the world no longer exists when the conditions for its existence cease (ignorance ceases, the formation of kamma ceases, etc.): hence the door is closed to the eternity view, the view of an eternal self. When we thus have the knowledge of origin and cessation, we have actual rather than conceptual knowledge that all formations are impermanent: hence the door is closed to any view of self. Then have we opened the door to Right View, opened the door to reality. The Buddha explains:<sup>89</sup>

**Whether there is, bhikkhus, the appearance of Tathagātas, or the non-appearance of Tathagātas, there exists this element** (*dhātu*), **the fixity of the Dhamma** (*Dhamma-ṭṭhitatā*), **the natural order of the Dhamma** (*Dhamma-niyāmatā*):

- [1] **all formations are impermanent** (*sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā*).
- [2] **...all formations are suffering** (*sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā*).
- [3] **...all things are non-self** (*sabbe dhammā anattā*).

**A Tathāgata awakens to this, and penetrates it.**

**Having done so, He explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, analyses it, and elucidates it.**

<sup>88</sup> For The Buddha's description of the origin of the world, please see above footnote 81, p.260.

<sup>89</sup> A.III.III.iv.4 'Uppādā-Suttaṃ' ('Arising Sutta')



Following The Buddha's instructions, we may know and see this fixed and natural order of the Dhamma,<sup>90</sup> and our view changes. The Buddha explains:<sup>91</sup>

**But this [Noble] one does not... take a stand about 'my self' (*attā me*).**

**He has no perplexity (*na kaṅkhati*) or doubt (*vicikicchati*) that what arises is only suffering's arising (*dukkhameva uppajjamānaṃ uppajjati*), what ceases is only suffering's ceasing (*dukkhaṃ nirujjhamānaṃ nirujjhati*).**

When explaining the First Noble Truth, The Buddha says:<sup>92</sup>

**In short, the five clinging-aggregates are suffering.**

Thus, when He here explains that the Noble One knows and sees that there is only the arising and cessation of suffering, The Buddha means that the Noble One knows and sees that there is only impermanence, the arising and cessation of the five aggregates, mind-matter, formations, the formed element. The Buddha explains:<sup>93</sup>

[1] **As only impermanence, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu sees matter as impermanent: that is his Right View....**

[2] **As only impermanence, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu sees sensation as impermanent: that is his Right View....**

[3] **As only impermanence, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu sees perception as impermanent: that is his Right View....**

[4] **As only impermanence, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu sees formation as impermanent: that is his Right View....**

[5] **As only impermanence, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu sees consciousness as impermanent: that is his Right View....**

When we become a Noble One, this knowledge about the impermanence (the arising and cessation) of the five aggregates has become our own knowledge, no longer something we have merely received from The Buddha or one of His disciples.<sup>94</sup> Hence, it is no longer a metaphysics arising from faith, speculation and reason. The Buddha explains:<sup>95</sup>

**His knowledge (*ñāṇa*) about this does not depend on others (*a-para-paccayā*).**

**It is in this way, Kaccāna, that there is Right View (*Sammā Ditṭhi hoti*).**

So long as we have not known and seen the structures and elements of the world as they really are, so long is only the door to wrong view open, and we see formations as permanence, happiness, and self. When, however, we have known and seen and understood the structures, formation, conditions and elements of reality (the factors of dependent origination and how they work), then have we entered the Dhamma stream (*Dhamma-sotaṃ*), have become a noble one

<sup>90</sup> For The Buddha's words on the fixity and natural order of dependent origination, please see His explanation above, p.17.

<sup>91</sup> S.II.I.ii.5 '*Kaccānagotta-Suttaṃ*'

<sup>92</sup> S.V.XII.ii.1 '*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*' ('Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta')

<sup>93</sup> S.III.I.I.v.9 '*Nandi-Kkhaya-Suttaṃ*' ('Delight Destruction Sutta') The Buddha gives the same explanation with regard to the six internal bases (S.IV.I.IV.i.1 '*Ajjhatta-Nandi-Kkhaya-Suttaṃ*' ('Internal Delight Destruction Sutta')), and the six external bases (ibid.2 '*Bāhira-Nandi-Kkhaya-Suttaṃ*' ('External Delight Destruction Sutta'))

<sup>94</sup> Please see also above the Venerable Sāriputta's explanation of faith becoming knowledge, footnote 104, p.113.

<sup>95</sup> S.II.I.ii.5 '*Kaccānagotta-Suttaṃ*'

(*ariya*), have closed the door to wrong view, and have opened the door to Right View. The Buddha explains:<sup>96</sup>

- [1] It is impossible, it cannot happen that a person possessed of view (*diṭṭhi sampanno puggalo*)[a Noble One], should treat any formation as permanence (*niccato*): no such thing is known. But it is possible, it can happen that a common person (*puthujjano*) should treat some formation as permanence: such a thing is known.
- [2] It is impossible, it cannot happen that a person possessed of view, should treat any formation as happiness (*sukhato*): no such thing is known. But it is possible, it can happen that a common person should treat some formation as happiness: such a thing is known.
- [3] It is impossible, it cannot happen that a person possessed of view, should treat any formation as self (*attato*): no such thing is known. But it is possible, it can happen that a common person should treat some formation as self: such a thing is known.

The Buddha explains:<sup>97</sup>

**In one of Right View, bhikkhus, wrong view is abolished.**

*Sammā-diṭṭhissa, bhikkhave, micchā-diṭṭhi nijjīṇṇā hoti.*

Having opened the door to Right View, having entered the stream of the Noble Eightfold Path,<sup>98</sup> we can now develop that Noble Eightfold Path, for The Buddha explains that we are then:<sup>99</sup>

**One who stands knocking at the door to the Deathless (*Amata-dvāraṃ*).**

Thank you.

<sup>96</sup> A.I.xv.1 '*Aṭṭhāna-Pāḷi*' ('Text of the Impossible')

<sup>97</sup> M.III.ii.7 '*Mahā-Cattārisaka-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Forty Sutta')

<sup>98</sup> The Buddha explains: 'This Noble Eightfold Path is the stream (*soto*)... One who possesses this Noble Eightfold Path is a stream-enterer (*sot-āpanno*).' (S.V.i.5 '*Dutiya Sāriputta-Suttaṃ*' ('Second Sāriputta Sutta'))

<sup>99</sup> S.II.iii.7 '*Paccaya-Suttaṃ*' ('Condition Sutta')



## BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BLIND<sup>1</sup>

Today's talk is about the second factor of the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Aṭṭhaṅgika Magga*) that leads to Nibbāna: Right Intention (*Sammā Saṅkappa*). A synonym for *saṅkappa* is *vitakka*, which we shall translate as 'thought'.<sup>2</sup>

Intention is threefold. The Buddha explains wrong intention and Right Intention:<sup>3</sup>

**And what, bhikkhus, is wrong intention?**

**Sensual intention** (*kāma saṅkappa*), **ill-intention** (*byāpāda saṅkappa*), **harmful intention** (*vihiṃsā saṅkappa*).

**And what, bhikkhus, is Right Intention?**

**Renunciative intention** (*nekkhamma-saṅkappa*), **good intention** (*abyāpāda saṅkappa*), **harmless intention** (*avihiṃsā-saṅkappa*).

We shall today discuss intention as a whole, by way of sensual intention and its opposite. Ill intention and harmful intention and their opposites we shall discuss next time.

First of all, we need to understand that intention (*saṅkappa*) is not the same as volition (*cetana*). They are separate mental factors, serving separate functions. Intention is thought applied in a certain way, whereas volition (*kamma*) is to act accordingly by body, speech or mind: intention is thus the forerunner to the volition.

When we hear of wrong and Right Intention, we may conclude that the arahant is simply someone who intends no evil. This view existed also in The Buddha's day, as taught by one wanderer Uggāhamāna Samaṇamuṇḍika.<sup>4</sup> He said the man who intends no evil intention (*na pāpakaṃ saṅkappaṃ saṅkappeti*) is an arahant. The Buddha's response was that a newborn baby must then be an arahant, for his evil bodily action is only to wriggle, his evil speech is only to whine, his evil livelihood is only to suckle his mother's breast, and his evil intention is only to sulk. He does not even have the notion sensual pleasures, nor the notion 'beings', which is why he has no sensual- or ill intention.

Unless we know better, we may see this as the child's 'innocence', and may see the end of suffering as a 'return' to that innocence. But, explains The Buddha, the child is far from innocent, for he possesses the latency of evil: that is his inheritance... from his unenlightened past self. Sooner or later, the newborn baby will develop sensual-, ill- and harmful intention, and engage in unwholesome *kamma* of body, speech and mind. The Buddha explains:<sup>5</sup>

**When he grows up and his faculties mature, the child enjoys himself provided and endowed with the five cords of sensuality: with sights... sounds... odours... flavours... touches that are wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensuality, and provocative of lust.**

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<sup>1</sup> BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BLIND: inspired by the English saying, 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.'

<sup>2</sup> THOUGHT: thinking as a process or a faculty, a conception or conclusion or intention or mental image formed in the process, a notion that is or may be meditated upon or that occupies the mind (POD)

<sup>3</sup> M.III.ii.7 '*Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta*' ('Great Forty Sutta')

<sup>4</sup> M.II.iii.8 '*Samaṇamuṇḍika Sutta*' ('The Samaṇamuṇḍika Sutta')

<sup>5</sup> M.I.iv.8 '*Mahā Taṇhā Saṅkhaya Sutta*' ('Great Destruction of Craving Sutta')

All parents have seen this maturing of faculties take place in their children, and if we look back, we may remember it take place in our own childhood. Very soon the child's evil bodily actions are far more than merely to wriggle (he throws his food on the floor), his evil speech is far more than merely to whine (he screams for his supper), and his livelihood is far more than merely to suckle his mother's breast (he demands attention, and manipulates his providers by smiles, laughs, tears, shrieks, anger and stubbornness).

And the 'innocent' child's sensuality develops further:

**On seeing a sight... he is attracted to it (*sā-rajjati*) if it is pleasing; he is repelled by it (*byāpajjati*) if it is displeasing....**

**Engaged as he is in favouring and opposing (*anurodha-virodham*), whatever sensation he senses (whether pleasant or painful or neither pleasant-nor-painful) he delights in that sensation, welcomes it, and remains holding on to it.**

The child's development is no more than the increased faculty for seeking pleasant sensations: running faster and more often between the poles of attraction and repulsion, favour and opposition, what he perceives as positive and what he perceives as negative. These things are determined by his experience. For example, 'Put your finger in your mouth, and it is nice and soft and wet (must remember to do that again!)' 'Put your finger into the candle and it burns (must remember not to do that again!)' But as he get older, things get also more complicated: 'Put your finger in your mouth, and Mummy will get angry! (must remember not to do that when Mummy can see!)' All these memories inform the child of how to gain pleasant sensations... that is his perception (*saññā*): the third aggregate of clinging.

Perception is explained by The Venerable Mahākaccāna (he was by The Buddha declared chief in elaborating The Buddha's brief teachings):<sup>6</sup>

- **Dependent on the eye and sights, arises eye consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇam*).**
- **With the meeting of the three, there is contact (*phasso*).**
- **Contact is the condition for sensation (*vedanā*).**
- **What one senses, that one perceives (*yaṃ vedeti taṃ saññānāti*).<sup>7</sup>**

When an external base<sup>8</sup> strikes its internal base<sup>9</sup> and the appropriate consciousness (*viññāṇa*) arises, there is contact (*phasso*). There are thus six kinds of consciousness (eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind consciousness), and corresponding six kinds of contact. For example, when a sight strikes the eye and an eye consciousness arises, there is eye contact. With the six kinds of contact, there are corresponding six kinds of sensation (*vedanā*),<sup>10</sup> and corresponding six kinds of perception (*saññā*). The Buddha explains:<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> M.I.ii.8 'Madhupiṇḍika Sutta' ('Sweet Ball Sutta')

<sup>7</sup> The Venerable Sāriputta explains: 'Sensation, perception and consciousness, friend: these things are conjoined, not disjoined, and it is impossible to separate each of these things from the others in order to describe the difference between them. For what one senses, that one perceives, and what one perceives that one is conscious of.' (M.I.v.3 'Mahā Vedalla Sutta' ('Great Questions-and-Answers Sutta'))

<sup>8</sup> EXTERNAL BASE: sight-, sound-, odour-, taste-, tangible-, mental-object base.

<sup>9</sup> INTERNAL BASE: eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, mind base.

<sup>10</sup> See The Buddha's explanation of the six kinds of sensation born, which are born of the six

**Contact (*phasso*), bhikkhus, is the origin of perception's arising.**

**And what, bhikkhus, are the different perceptions?**

- [1] One is perception of colour (*saññā rūpesu*),
- [2] another is perception of sound (*saññā saddesu*),
- [3] another is perception of odour (*saññā gandhesu*),
- [4] another is perception of flavour (*saññā rasesu*),
- [5] another is perception of touch (*saññā phoṭṭhabbesu*),
- [6] another is perception of other things (*saññā dhammesu*).

Perception's function is to apprehend the object's sign (*nimitta*). The Buddha explains, for example, sight perception:<sup>12</sup>

**And why, bhikkhus, do you call it perception?**

**It perceives, bhikkhus, therefore is it called perception. And what does it perceive?**

**It perceives blue, it perceives yellow, it perceives red, it perceives white.**

Colour is colour-perception's sign, and there are six kinds of sign (*nimitta*):<sup>13</sup>

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) colour sign ( <i>rūpa nimitta</i> )  | 4) taste sign ( <i>rasa nimitta</i> )          |
| 2) sound sign ( <i>sadda nimitta</i> )  | 5) touch sign ( <i>phoṭṭhabba nimitta</i> )    |
| 3) odour sign ( <i>gandha nimitta</i> ) | 6) other things sign ( <i>dhamma nimitta</i> ) |

When an eye consciousness arises and ceases with a particular colour sign, it is followed by the arising of mind consciousnesses that arise and cease with the same sign. The mind consciousnesses 'process' the sight further, grasp further signs (*nimitta*) and characteristics (*byañjana*), and that way we perceive the sight as a certain thing.

Say we see a gleaming, silver Mercedes; it begins as the shades of bright grey that strike the eye. Then, as our eye wanders, further eye consciousnesses arise that define the car's outline, parts, etc. This takes place within less than a second, during which time many eye consciousnesses will have arisen and ceased, each followed by mind consciousnesses that have arisen and ceased, and have apprehended and 'processed' the signs of wheels, bonnet, wind-screen, and driver and passenger, and we perceive and verbalize 'car'. With the characteristic grille and the Mercedes star, we perceive and verbalize 'Mercedes', and as we examine further, we perceive and verbalize: 'Spanking new Mercedes, with the owner and his wife, rosewood dashboard and white leather upholstery.'

Then why do we verbalize 'car', and not 'elephant'? Because convention has termed a grey object possessed of those particular signs 'a car'. Convention has termed a grey object possessed of certain other signs 'an elephant'. The terminology that comprises our language is namely no more than convention according to which a certain collection of signs, a certain perception, results in a certain term. The Buddha explains:<sup>14</sup>

**Resulting in terminology (*vohāra-vepakkam*), bhikkhus, is perception, I declare.**

kinds of contact, quoted footnote 15, p.68.

<sup>11</sup> S.III.I.II.i.4 'Upādāna-paripavatta Sutta' ('Clinging-Phases Sutta')

<sup>12</sup> S.III.I.II.iii.7 'Khajjanīya Sutta' ('Being Devoured Sutta')

<sup>13</sup> M.III.iv.8 'Uddesa Vibhāṅga Sutta' ('Explanatory Analysis Sutta')

<sup>14</sup> A.VI.II.vi.9 'Nibbedhika Sutta' ('Penetrating Sutta')

**As one perceives a thing, so one terms (*voharati*) it: 'Thus I perceived.'**

A newborn baby who sees a Mercedes may not really perceive anything but colour: he has not learned to perceive further. As his faculties develop, however, as he gains more experience of things in the world, he may perceive a Mercedes as 'a car'. And as his faculties develop even further, he may begin to see a Mercedes as an object for pleasant sensation: he may begin to see a Mercedes as a sensual object. The Venerable Mahākaccāna explains how this takes place:

**What one perceives, one thinks about**(*yaṃ sañjānāti-vitakketi*).

**What one thinks about, that one diversifies**(*yaṃ vitakketi taṃ papañceti*).

Diversification (*papañca*) is the process of processing the signs with relation to our experience and expectations. The Venerable Mahākaccāna explains:

**With what one has diversified as cause, diversified perceptions and notions beset a man with respect to past, future and present sights cognizable by the eye.**

One perception leads to the next; it is led by our intention, and our intention is led by our view: we see things the way we intend to see them. But it does not follow like that, neat and tidy, one by one: it is a flood of confusion, each confused perception, intention and view feeding another confused perception, intention and view.

The boy of a royal, noble or high-class family has lust only for the swanky sports model of a Mercedes, because his experience of cars is such that he perceives the saloon-model to be a mere minister's or businessman's car. The upper-middle class boy's experience is such that the saloon model is a symbol of success, but only the latest model, whereas the lower middle-class boy's experience is such that he has lust also for the second-hand Mercedes. The boy in the slums has lust for any car, whereas the boy in the village in the back of beyond has lust even for a motorbike, and the boy in the depths of the jungle has lust only for a swift canoe, because he does not even know what a car is: even if he did, it is of no value in his jungle world. Whatever the case may be, with the development of sensuality, there is lust. The Venerable Sāriputta explains:<sup>15</sup> **Lust is a maker of signs.** And his teacher The Buddha explains:<sup>16</sup>

**Lustful intention** (*saṅkappa-rāgo*) **is Man's sensuality;**

**The beautiful things just stand there in the world.**

Lustful intention is why the Mercedes Benz company's order books are always full. But a Mercedes is not beautiful: no car is beautiful: the very idea is ridiculous. So why do we so often see fully grown men supposedly possessed of intelligence (certainly possessed of the vote), role models for their children, slaver over a car?<sup>17</sup> Because of the perversions (*vipallāsā*).<sup>18</sup> The Buddha explains:<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> M.I.v.3 'Mahā-Vedalla Sutta' ('Great Questions&Answers Sutta')

<sup>16</sup> A.VI.II.vi.9 'Nibbedhika Sutta' ('Penetrating Sutta')

<sup>17</sup> SLAVER (OVER SOMETHING): 'let saliva run out of one's mouth; drool: *slavering over a plate of spaghetti*. ... (OVER SOMEBODY/SOMETHING) show great eagerness, desire, etc.: *Stop slavering over that baby!* • *The dealer was slavering over some precious stones.* (OALD)

<sup>18</sup> PERVERSE: '...blindly or unaccountably wrong. ... [POD]' 'turned aside from right or truth...'

Four, bhikkhus, are these perversions of perception (*saññā vipallāsā*)...of thought (*citta vipallāsā*)...of view (*ditṭhi vipallāsā*). What four?

[1] 'In impermanence (*anicce*) is permanence (*niccanti*).'<sup>19</sup>...

[2] 'In suffering (*dukkhe*) is happiness (*sukhanti*).'<sup>20</sup>...

[3] 'In non-self (*anattani*) is self (*attāti*).'<sup>21</sup>...

[4] 'In the unbeautiful (*asubhe*) is beautiful (*subhanti*).'<sup>22</sup>

Our view determines our potential actions, the actions that we might do: our intention makes the potential dynamic, gives it power. The beautiful things just stand there, but we attend to them in a certain way, engage in a relationship with them, and that way get attached to them, invest them with the power to give us eternal life and happiness, with only beautiful perceptions, and, of course, powerful, happy, beautiful 'ME'. That is our perverted perception, for the beautiful things do of themselves possess not even one such power: the beautiful things just stand there in the world, be they a beautiful being or a beautiful thing.

Attending to things in this perverted way is what The Buddha calls unwise attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*). Attending to the beautiful things with unwise attention is to attend to the beautiful sign (*subha nimitta*). When we attend to the beautiful sign (attend with sensual intention), sensual desire (*kāma-cchando*) arises and increases:<sup>20</sup>

**There is, bhikkhus, the beautiful sign.**

**Frequently giving unwise attention to it is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen sensual desire, and for the increase and augmentation of arisen sensual desire.**

The perversions, unwise attention and sensual intention are very easy for us to apprehend, for they are the nutriment of modern progress and development, of modern science, of modern government, of modern primary, secondary and tertiary<sup>21</sup> education, and of the modern ministry for sensual propaganda,<sup>22</sup> the media. What is perhaps unique in the modern world of this historical period is that all forces in modern society have as nutriment the same perverted perception, unwise attention, and sensual intention: that is why the dynamics of modern development are stupendous.

We have invested full power in the media: they are run by commercial interests: sensual interests. Thus, a very important element of the modern newspaper is exciting full-colour photographs, and much sensually enticing propa-

PERVERSION: the act of perverting: condition of being perverted: a diverting from the true object: a turning from the right or true: a distortion [...L...pfx. *per-*, wrongly, *vertēre*, to turn.] [CTCD] 'Her account was a perversion of the truth [OALD].'

<sup>19</sup> A.IV.I.v.9 'Vipallāsa Sutta' ('Perversions Sutta')

<sup>20</sup> S.V.II.vi.1 'Āhāra Sutta' ('Nutriment Sutta')

<sup>21</sup> TERTIARY EDUCATION: education at university or college level. [Brit.] □ *institutions of tertiary education...Selby Tertiary College.* (CCED)

<sup>22</sup> PROPAGANDA: 'information, often inaccurate information, which a political organization publishes or broadcasts in order to influence people. □ *The Front adopted an aggressive propaganda campaign against its rivals. ...anti-European propaganda movies.* [CCED]' 'a congregation of the Roman Catholic Church, founded 1622, charged with the spreading of Catholicism (*dē propāgandā fidē*, 'concerning the faith to be propagated') [CTCD]'



ganda (the politically correct term is ‘product information’). The magazine industry depends on sensual images, both in the articles and in full-page advertisements, and junk-mail has no other purpose in life. Even in this age of so-called equality, the chief lure<sup>23</sup> remains the idolized female model, who like a prostitute exhibits her feminine signs for money: to arouse the male’s lust for other, and the female’s lust for self. And at our morning, noon, afternoon, evening, and night worship at the idiot-box,<sup>24</sup> there is a flood of commercial icons, hymns, and incantations<sup>25</sup> of sensual propaganda every so many minutes (the politically correct term is ‘product information’). The temples of MODERN society are the shopping malls, -centres and hypermarkets, the holy places are the fashionable shopping districts in the great cities of the world, and the religious devotion is lustful intention (the politically correct term is ‘freedom and prosperity’).

Passionate shopping is one of the chief signs of the MODERN man, and the pride and joy of his liberated woman, and at an increasingly early age their children. In the sensually most developed and developing societies, commercial interests have through the media successfully expanded their markets by developing objects of sensuality that are for children only: children’s own clothes, food, music, literature, even language, etc. The moral mandate for this is given by MODERN psychology, which pontificates against parents ‘foisting’<sup>26</sup> their old-fashioned views on their children, and demands that children have freedom: their own ‘space’.<sup>27</sup> The only thing MODERN children have been given, however, is an ever changing array of sensual objects with which to identify themselves (fashion), values dictated by the captains of industry (fads), and an accelerated and precocious<sup>28</sup> desire for full sensual gratification: the scientific word for this is ‘youth culture’, which has given rise to another scientific word, ‘generation gap’. But it is not a gap: it is a mirror. The only true difference be-

<sup>23</sup> LURE: an attractive quality that something has, or something that you find attractive. □ *The excitement of hunting big game* [killing elephants, buffalo and other large, innocent animals] *has been a lure to Europeans for 200 years ... The lure of rural life is proving as strong as ever.* (CCED)

<sup>24</sup> IDIOT-BOX: the television [mainly BRIT/BOOB TUBE AM] □ *The original script was written with the idiot box in mind.* (CCED)

<sup>25</sup> ICON: ‘sacred painting, mosaic [POD]’ *‘The ads helped Nike to achieve iconic status.* [CCED]’  
HYMN: ‘song of praise, esp. to God as sung in religious service [POD]’ INCANTATION: ‘magical formula, spell, charm [POD]’ ‘a series of words that a person says or sings as a magic spell. □ ...huddled shapes whispering strange prayers and incantations. [CCED]’

<sup>26</sup> FOIST: ‘if you say that someone foists something on you, or foists it upon you, you dislike the way that they force you to listen to it or experience it. □ *I don’t see my role as foisting my beliefs on them ... What this amounts to is foisting upon women the responsibility for reducing ‘the opportunities for crime’ by changing their behaviour.* [CCED]’ *‘He said that parents should not try to foist their values on their children.* [CIDE]’

<sup>27</sup> ‘SPACE’: If you give someone space to think about something or to develop as a person, you allow them the time and freedom to this. □ *You need space to think everything over ... We will give each other space to develop.* (CCED)

<sup>28</sup> PRECOCIOUS: A precocious child is very clever, mature, or good at something, often in a way that you usually only expect to find in an adult. □ *Margaret was always a precocious child ... She burst on to the world tennis scene as a precocious 14-year old ...* (CCED)

tween the modern adult and child, is that the child's sensual intention is fully developed many years before any means of livelihood is developed.<sup>29</sup> Hence, there has been a dramatic increase in criminal livelihood for children: they steal from their parents, steal from shops, and a growing problem is younger and younger schoolchildren who engage in prostitution. Murder, violence, even rape by children has also increased. Ultimately, of course, it is only a reflection of the values of the society they have been born into: sensual values that have been foisted upon them by modern parents, school, society, government and media.

Women's so-called 'liberation' from their 'traditional' role of caring for their children to the modern role of not caring for their children, and the radical role of even killing their children (abortion) has also been driven by one thing only: the dynamic of sensual intention. Sensual intention is both why the abortionist's unwanted pregnancy was obtained, and why it is unwanted. And because modern education merely reinforces these manifold sensual intentions (academia is no longer with the intention for wisdom, but with the intention for wealth), modern government is exercised by graduates with the same intention, and everyone hurtles blindly along towards misconduct in body, speech and mind: modern orthodoxy is blindness owing to unwise attention, perversion of perception, thought and view, and not surprising is it that all-out confusion on all fronts is the chief sign of modernity.

This blindness is, of course, only natural: also wild animals are blind in this way. Only once we have tamed and trained our wild and perverted perceptions, once we are enlightened, do we see things as they are. Until then, we do not see things as they are, for our view is naturally blocked, explains the Buddha, by a mountain.

He explains it in connection with one Prince Jayasena.<sup>30</sup> The prince had asked the novice Aciravata to explain how a bhikkhu attains the one-pointed concentration of jhāna.<sup>31</sup> When the novice had explained, the prince got up and left, protesting that such a thing was impossible. Then the novice went and reported the matter to The Buddha, and The Buddha gave a simile. He explained that a wild but tameable animal may by taming become tame, whereas a wild but tameable animal that receives no taming cannot become tame:

**So too, Aggivessana, such as must be known through renunciation (*nekkhammena nātabbam*),<sup>32</sup> seen through renunciation (*nekkhammena dāṭṭhabbam*), attained through renunciation (*nekkhammena pattabbam*), realized through renunciation (*nekkhammena sacchikātabbam*), that Prince Jayasena, living in the midst of sensual pleasure (*kāma-majjhe vasanto*), enjoying sensual pleasure (*kāme paribhūjanto*), being devoured by thoughts of sensual pleasure (*kāma-vitakkehi khajjamāno*), being consumed by the fever of**

<sup>29</sup> Here, the author pointed out that when parents criticize their children's modern conduct, they forget that the deterioration of values that has taken place has done so with the democratic mandate of the parents' generation. The children neither invented TV-, consumer- or youth-culture: they have inherited it. For example, children become TV-addicts only so long as there is a TV in the house, and their parents watch it: watching the news and sports is namely no more useful or important than watching cartoons or soap-operas.

<sup>30</sup> M.III.iii.5 'Danta-Bhūmi Sutta' ('The Grade of the Tamed Sutta')

<sup>31</sup> JHĀNA: this is a state of concentration that is explained in the continuation of the talk.

<sup>32</sup> RENUNCIATION: please see definitions, footnote 24, p.238.

**sensual pleasure** (*kāma-pariḷāhena pariḷāhamāno*), **bent on the search for sensual pleasure** (*kāma-pariyesanāya ussuko*), **could know** (*ñassati*), **see** (*dakkhati*), **or realize it** (*sacchi*): **such a thing is impossible.**

The prince's life was as is **BLINDFOLDED**, 'developed' life, the same as what The Buddha explains was his life as the bodhisatta Prince Siddhattha:<sup>33</sup> a life governed by unwise attention, and sensual perception and intention, issuing in the ignoble sensual search. That is, the search for:<sup>34</sup>

**wife and children, men and women slaves, goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, gold and silver.**<sup>35</sup>

The Buddha gave yet another simile. He said it was just as if two friends went for a walk in the countryside, and came to a great mountain. Then one friend climbed up to the top of the mountain, and his friend below asked him what he could see, and he said: 'Standing on top of this mountain, friend, I see lovely parks, lovely groves, lovely meadows, and lovely ponds.' And his friend at the bottom said: 'It's impossible, friend, it cannot be.' Then the friend on top climbed down, took his friend by the arm, led him up to the top of the mountain, and asked him what he could see. His friend replied: 'Standing on top of this mountain, friend, I see lovely parks, lovely groves, lovely meadows, and lovely ponds.'

'Friend, just a little earlier we heard you say, "It's impossible..."'

'It's because I was blocked by this high mountain, friend, that I did not see what was there to be seen.' If we stand before a high mountain, we cannot see what is on the other side, because our view is blocked.

The Buddha explained further:

**So too, Aggivessana, Prince Jayasena is blocked, obstructed, and shut in by a yet greater mass than this: the mass of ignorance** (*avijjā-khandha*).

Another way to say this is: the prince was blindfolded by Māra.<sup>36</sup>

In The Buddha's simile, the friend at the bottom followed his friend to the top, and was then able to see what could be seen. In reality, the prince had left. Why did he leave? No time! Busy! Likewise, if we follow The Buddha to the top, we are then able to see the end of suffering as it can be seen, but if our intention is all the time sensual, we cannot renounce time for anything else. Our mountain of ignorance is mighty, and as The Buddha explained about the prince, so long as our intentions are sensual, we cannot even conceive of climbing to the top of the mountain.

<sup>33</sup> The man who became Buddha was before that event a prince by the name Siddhattha.

<sup>34</sup> M.I.iii.6 'Ariya-Pariyesanā Sutta' ('Noble Search Sutta')

<sup>35</sup> The Buddha explains: 'In dependence on sensual perception, there arises sensual intention (*kāma-saṅkappo*); in dependence on sensual intention there arises sensual desire (*kāma-cchando*); in dependence on sensual desire, there arises sensual passion (*kāma-pariḷāho*); in dependence on sensual passion, there arises a sensual search (*kāma-pariyesanā*).' (S.II.III.ii.2 'Sa-Nidāna Sutta' ('With a Cause Sutta'))

<sup>36</sup> **BLINDFOLDED:** a blindfold is a strip of cloth that is tied over someone's eyes so they cannot see. ... If you blindfold someone, you tie a blindfold over their eyes. **□ His abductors blindfolded him and drove him to a flat in southern Beirut ... The report says prisoners were often kept blindfolded.** (CCED)

It is owing to this mighty mountain that we on the one hand speak of the glorious present, what with *paññā* science and development, and on the other hand refer to the glorious past, solemnly to declare: ‘Developing jhāna and attaining Nibbāna is in this day and age impossible. Just give *dāna*, and keep the five precepts.’ ‘Even that can be impossible!’ And then we sigh, ‘*Sādhu!*’ ... with relief, have made the almighty mountain of ignorance mightier, and again run on in blind pursuit of the beautiful things that they will give us the fivefold beautiful sensations.<sup>37</sup> Sensation is the condition for craving, for clinging, for birth and for ageing and death: we run on in *saṃsāra*.

How to climb the mountain? The Buddha explained that the prince could not understand because what was to be understood requires renunciation (*nekkhamma*). And what is renunciation? Renunciation is giving up, forsaking, detachment. A very good example is the eight precepts,<sup>38</sup> when we renounce the sensual pleasures of venery, alcohol, unnecessary food, music, dancing, self-adornment, and a luxurious bed. But try suggesting to someone that they renounce these pleasures: their face goes dark, as if they had been diagnosed with a fatal disease, and they stammer protests. That is, in fact, a symptom of the most fatal disease of all: sensuality. ‘Can’t let go! Even for a day!’ Our common perception is that renunciation equals self-mortification, that the eightfold Uposatha is a day of fasting and torture.<sup>39</sup>

Bhikkhus observe not only the eight precepts, they observe hundreds and hundreds of precepts, and not only once in a blue moon, but every single day and night of their entire life. Has The Buddha then laid down precepts of self-mortification for bhikkhus? Even though He in His very first teaching says self-mortification is without purpose?<sup>40</sup> To think so is to fail to understand why The Buddha established a Saṅgha, for the precepts have nothing at all to do with self-mortification: every single precept laid down by The Buddha for the bhikkhus to observe is a compulsory training towards wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*), towards renunciative intention.

It is significant that the word Vinaya means specifically ‘abolishing/destruction/removal/giving-up/forsaking’. The Buddha explains to the general Sīha:<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> FIVEFOLD: through eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body

<sup>38</sup> EIGHT PRECEPTS: 1) not to kill, 2) not to steal, 3) not engage in unchastity, 4) not to lie, 5) not to take any intoxicants, 6) not to eat from noon till next day’s rise of dawn, 7) not to watch or engage in dancing, singing, music, other entertainment, not to wear ornaments, scent, or beautifying cosmetics, 8) not to sleep in a large, luxurious bed. The Buddha advises all Buddhists to undertake this one-day observance every week (A.X.I.v.6 ‘*Sakka-Suttam*’ (‘The Sakya Sutta’)). He explains the observance as undertaken by the noble disciple in A.III.II.ii.10 ‘*Uposatha-Suttam*’ (‘Observance Day Sutta’). Why also this advice by The Buddha is ignored (and the eightfold Observance Day among Buddhists is moribund) is the subject of this talk.

<sup>39</sup> Here, the author mentioned that a young, *paññā* adult gentleman once said to him in earnestness: ‘Doing good is torture!’

<sup>40</sup> The Buddha explains: ‘And there is the practice of self-mortification, which is painful (*dukkho*), ignoble (*anariya*), and without purpose (*an-attha-saṃhīto*).’ (S.V.XII.ii.1 ‘*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana Sutta*’ (‘Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta’))

<sup>41</sup> Vin.Mv.vi ‘*Sīha Senāpati Vatthu*’ (‘General Sīha Case’)

Indeed I, Sīha, a forsaking Dhamma teach (*vinayāya Dhammaṃ desemi*), of lust, of hatred, of delusion (*rāgassa, dosassa, mahassa*); manifold evil unwholesome things (*pāpakānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ*) a forsaking Dhamma I teach (*vinayāya dhammaṃ desemi*).

That is why when we as bhikkhus do not observe the Vinaya, we may observe our mind and know and see that it is because of sensual intention: the opposite of the renunciative intention, the opposite of The Buddha's Dhamma for bhikkhus. To a village-headman, The Buddha explains the sensual intention of a bhikkhu who accepts, possesses and uses money:<sup>42</sup>

For whomever gold and silver are proper, headman, the five strands of sensuality are also proper.<sup>43</sup> And for whomever the five strands of sensuality are proper, you may be sure that he is possessed of Dhamma that is not of ascetics (*a-samaṇa-dhamma*), Dhamma that is not of sons of the Sakyan (*a-Sakya-puttiya-dhamma*).<sup>44</sup>

How then to train oneself towards the renunciative intention, towards wise attention? The Buddha explains:<sup>45</sup>

Bhikkhus, a well-taught noble disciple, ... does not attend to those things unfit for attention, and he attends to those things fit for attention.

Does this mean that we simply cover our eyes to the world? Like the three monkeys: no see, no hear, no speak? Like the newborn baby? To do that is to put yet a blindfold on the blindfold that is already there. The beautiful things in the world are namely not in themselves beautiful: they are beautiful only because we grasp the beautiful signs. Thus, a sensual perception (sign) is unfit for attention for it gives rise to lust. The Buddha explains to a bhikkhu Udāyin:

Now, Udāyin, the happiness and joy that arise dependent on these five cords of sensual pleasure are called sensual happiness (*kāma-sukhaṃ*)....

It should not be pursued (*na āsevitabbaṃ*), it should not be developed (*na bhāvetabbaṃ*), it should not be cultivated (*na bahulākātabbaṃ*): it should be feared this kind of happiness, I declare (*bhāyītabbaṃ etassa sukhaṃ*).

The things not to be feared are perceptions (signs) that do not give rise to lust. But can we decide our perception? Yes, that is The Buddha's path: the path of Right View and Right Intention. By keeping the Dhamma in mind, we replace our sensual perception with a renunciative one. Sensual perception is natural to the untamed mind; renunciative perception comes through training the mind, so it is tame.

<sup>42</sup> S.IV.viii.10 ('*Mañicūḷaka Sutta*')

<sup>43</sup> GOLD AND SILVER: The Buddha explains: 'Should any bhikkhu obtain, or have [someone else] obtain or keep or consent to gold or silver, there is [an offence] of expiation with forfeiture.' And He explains: '*Gold* means it is called the colour of the Teacher [The Buddha had a golden complexion.] *Silver* means the *kahāpaṇa*, the *māsaka* of copper, the *māsaka* of wood, the *māsaka* of lac, used in business.' (Vin.Nis.Pāc.ii.8)

<sup>44</sup> FIVE STRANDS OF SENSUALITY eye—sights, ear—sounds, nose—odours, tongue—flavours, body—touches. The Buddha explains: 'And what is not a bhikkhu's own resort but the domain of others? It is the five strands of sensuality.' (S.V.III.i.6 '*Sakuṇagghī-Suttam*' ('The Hawk Sutta'))

<sup>45</sup> M.I.i.2 '*Sabb-Āsava Sutta*' ('All the Taints Sutta')

The Buddha explains:<sup>46</sup>

**One's perceptions arise and cease owing to a cause and conditions.**

**Some perceptions arise through training, some pass away through training.**

The Buddha explains that by training, we apply wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*), reflecting wisely (*paṭisaṅkhā yoniso*), and guard the doors of our faculties: eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind door. The Buddha explains:<sup>47</sup>

**How then, bhikkhus, is there a bhikkhu's facultative guarding the doors (*indriyesu gutta-dvāro*)?**

[1] **Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu with the eye a sight having seen (*cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā*), there is no sign-seizing, no details-seizing (*na nimitta-ggāhi hoti n-ānubyañjana-ggāhi*).**

**Since, if he were with the eye faculty unrestrained to dwell, covetousness, grief, evil, unwholesome states might issue, such restraint he practises (*tassa saṃvarāya paṭipajjati*), he guards the eye faculty (*rakkhati cakkh-undriyaṃ*), eye-faculty restraint he achieves (*cakkh-undriye saṃvaram āpajjati*).**

[2] **With the ear a sound having heard... ear-faculty restraint he achieves.**

[3] **With the nose an odour having smelt... nose-faculty restraint he achieves.**

[4] **With the tongue a flavour having tasted... tongue-faculty restraint he achieves.**

[5] **With the body a tangible having touched... body-faculty restraint he achieves.**

[6] **With the mind something having cognized, there is no sign-seizing, no details-seizing.**

**Since, if he were with the mind faculty unrestrained to dwell, covetousness, grief, evil, unwholesome states might issue, such restraint he practises, he guards the mind faculty, mind-faculty restraint he achieves.**

This means, that in order to prevent lust from arising, we no longer pay unwise attention to things, but pay wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*): we replace our perverted perception with a perception that accords with reality. Thus, if it is what we perceive as a beautiful animate thing, a beautiful being, we replace the beautiful sign with the unbeautiful sign:<sup>48</sup>

**There is, bhikkhus, the unbeautiful sign (*asubha nimitta*).**

**Frequently giving wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) to it is the denourishment that prevents unarisen sensual desire from arising and arisen sensual desire from increase and augmentation.**

The unbeautiful sign in a beautiful human being is the thirty-two parts of the body: head-hairs, body hairs, nails, skin, teeth, bones, flesh, etc. For example, if we get incredibly excited about our darling grandson, we simply change our perception from: 'My gorgeous little grandson' to single hairs emerging like worms out of a greasy scalp, two eyeballs rolling in their own slime, a thin layer of skin covering flesh that is red and wet with blood, stinking excrement steaming in the large intestine, and urine in the bladder, a host of worms, etc. That is seeing our darling grandson's body as it really is; it is a sight that does not sustain lust. Then do we see him clearer, and are more useful as a grandparent: a blind grandparent can never be of much use, for they have aged in vain.<sup>49</sup> The same principle applies for any other passionately loved one.

<sup>46</sup> D.i.9 'Poṭṭhapāda Sutta' (Poṭṭhapāda is the wanderer to whom The Buddha gives this explanation.)

<sup>47</sup> S.IV.I.IV.iv.2 'Rath-Opama-Suttam' ('The Chariot-Simile Sutta')

<sup>48</sup> S.V.II.i.2 'Kāya Sutta' ('Body Sutta')

<sup>49</sup> The Buddha explains: 'The man of little learning ages like an ox. His flesh grows; his wisdom does not grow.' (Dhp.xi.7 'Jarā Vagga' ('Ageing Chapter'))

We may also recollect The Buddha words to the Venerable Nāgita regarding attachment to loved ones:<sup>50</sup>

**With love, for sure, Nāgita, the arising of change and alteration gives rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair: such is the issue of it.**<sup>51</sup>

If we have lust for a beautiful inanimate object, say a gleaming silver Mercedes, we can do the same kind of thing, and attend to four rubber tyres, the engine, the silver paint, strips and sheets of metal, etc., and attend to the impermanence of the Mercedes, perhaps see it smashed as in an accident, or rusted in a car-dump. That is seeing the Mercedes as it really is, a sight that does not sustain lust: we become sober, and do not covet the beautiful Mercedes. With food, we may reflect on all the trouble taken to be able to get it, to prepare it, and then the speed with which it becomes disgusting.

Take a mouthful of the darling red-prawn durian, chew, and then spit it out on the plate, and see how much lust arises upon seeing it after only seconds in the darling mouth. And also recollect The Buddha's words to the Venerable Nāgita regarding food:

**Having taken food and drink, eaten and relished, for sure, Nāgita, there is urine and excrement: such is the issue of it.**<sup>52</sup>

The Buddha explains also that we with wise attention reflect on the four requisites: clothes, food, dwelling and medicine. Clothes are for protection and pudency, food is for nourishment, the dwelling is for protection and comfort, and medicine is for sickness. Hence, if we go to the shopping mall it is to buy something we need. All the flashy signs telling us to buy this, that and the other unnecessary thing, we attend to as sounds and colour, with the thought: 'No need!' If all the people in all the world thought like this, all wars would stop immediately, on an international, national, local and personal level. Just look at the extra things that we with the eight precepts have renounced: do we need the third and fourth meal of the day? Does a woman need to adopt the signs of a prostitute? Does a man need to adopt the signs of a playboy? Do we need to listen to signs of love? Do we need to see the signs of who won the World Cup in football, and how? Do we need to see the sign of the prime-minister of Mexico? Of Malaysia? The umpteenth peaceaccord in the Middle East? Do we need the sign of a luxurious bed that even ~~modern~~ medicine says is bad for one's back? No. All we need to do is fear those things. If we want happiness, we leave politics to politicians, songs to singers, and sports to sportsmen.

The Buddha explains also that we with wise attention avoid things that will get us into trouble: a dangerous animal, a cliff, unsuitable place (e.g. a casino), bad friends, etc. The Buddha does not teach us to be bold and heroic, for that is dangerous, we might get hurt or die, and then what? If we are crippled as well as blind, we cannot climb the mountain.

<sup>50</sup> A.V.I.iii.10 'Nāgita Sutta' (Nāgita is the bhikkhu to whom The Buddha speaks.)

<sup>51</sup> CHANGE AND ALTERATION: ageing, sickness and death

<sup>52</sup> The Buddha was here referring to the Venerable Nāgita's interest in The Buddha and Saṅgha's cultivating patrons, receiving honour, and large offerings by many patrons of much and good food. Please see further below, footnote 56, p.278.

Then the Buddha explains also that we with wise attention replace wrong intention (*micchā saṅkappa*) (sensual-, ill-, and harmful intention) with Right Intention (*Sammā Saṅkappa*) (renunciative-, good-, and harmless intention).

Now, with a mind uninterested in the beautiful things in the world, we may move up the mountain:

**Here, Udāyin, quite secluded from sensual pleasures (*viviceva kāmehi*), secluded from unwholesome things (*vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*), a bhikkhu with applied thought (*sa-vitakkaṃ*), with sustained thought (*sa-vicāraṃ*), and seclusion-born joy and happiness (*viveka-jaṃ pīti-sukhaṃ*), enters and abides in the first jhāna (*paṭṭhamam jhānaṃ*).**

With the first jhāna, gross sensual perception (*kāma-saññā*) has been renounced for the single, steady mental, counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) of our meditation subject; that is the first jhāna's true but subtle perception of seclusion-born joy and happiness.

And we renounce it for the second jhāna's true but subtle perception of concentration-born happiness. And we renounce that for the third jhāna's true but subtle perception of equanimity and happiness. And we renounce that for the fourth jhāna's true but subtle perception of pure equanimity.<sup>53</sup> These perceptions of the four jhānas arise through training, and as we renounce the subtle for the more subtle, they pass away through training. The four jhānas are the eighth factor of The Buddha's path: Right Concentration. The Buddha says of the bhikkhu in jhāna:<sup>54</sup>

**This bhikkhu is said to have blindfolded Māra.**

The Buddha explains the happiness of having blindfolded Māra. He explains it to the Venerable Udāyin:<sup>55</sup>

**This is called the happiness of renunciation (*nekkhamma-sukhaṃ*), the happiness of seclusion (*paviveka-sukhaṃ*), the happiness of peace (*upasama-sukhaṃ*), the happiness of enlightenment (*sambo-dhi-sukhaṃ*).**

**It should be pursued (*āsevitabbaṃ*), it should be developed (*bhāvetabbaṃ*), it should be cultivated (*bahulīkātabbaṃ*), it should not be feared this happiness (*na bhāyitabbaṃ etassa sukhasa*), I declare.<sup>56</sup>**

Why should this kind of happiness not be feared? Because it makes it possible for us to see things according to reality; it makes it possible for us to see ultimate reality rather than conceptual reality.

<sup>53</sup> 'Seclusion-born- (*viveka-ja*)... concentration-born- (*samādhi-ja*)... equanimous- (*upekkhā*); neither painful nor happy, subtle, true, perception (*a-dukkham-a-sukha-sukhuma-sacca-saññā*).' For The Buddha's explanation of the jhānas as the replacement of each of these perception with the next subtler (yet true) perception, that one is conscious of, please see D.i.9 'Poṭṭhapāda Sutta' ('Poṭṭhapāda is the wanderer to whom The Buddha gives this explanation.)

<sup>54</sup> M.I.iii.5 'Nivāpa Sutta' ('Bait Sutta')

<sup>55</sup> M.II.ii.6 'Laṭukikopama Sutta' ('Quail Simile Sutta')

<sup>56</sup> In His explanation to the Venerable Nāgita (above, p.276), The Buddha said: 'I have nothing not truck with honour, Nāgita, nor has honour with me. Whosoever cannot obtain at will, easily and without difficulty this happiness of renunciation, this happiness of seclusion, this happiness of peace and this happiness of enlightenment, which I can obtain at will, easily and without difficulty, let him enjoy that dungy happiness, that slothful happiness, that happiness gotten of gains, favour and fame.'



The Buddha explains:<sup>57</sup>

**Concentration, bhikkhus, you should cultivate** (*samādhiṃ, bhikkhave, bhāvetha*).

**Concentrated** (*samāhito*), bhikkhus, **a bhikkhu according to reality understands** (*bhikkhu yathā-bhūtaṃ pajānāti*).

Concentration is Samatha, and once we have Samatha, we may develop Vipassanā. And with developed Vipassanā, we may realize the highest renunciation, Nibbāna. The Buddha explains:<sup>58</sup>

**If a bhikkhu should wish:**

**‘The by the taints destruction** (*āsavaṇaṃ khayā*) **taintless mind-liberation and wisdom liberation** (*anāsavaṃ ceto-vimuttiṃ paññā-vimuttiṃ*), **as an apparent thing** (*diṭṭheva-dhamme*), **by personal direct knowledge having realized** (*sayaṃ abhiññā sacchi-katvā*), **may I enter upon and dwell** (*upasampajja vihareyyan’ti*), **let him**

☉ **the precepts fulfil** (*sīlesvevassa paripūrakāṇ*),

☉ **to internal serenity of mind be devoted** (*ajjhataṃ ceto-samatham-anu-yutto*),

☉ **not neglect jhāna** (*a-nirākata-jjhāno*),

☉ **of Vipassanā be possessed** (*vipassanāya samannāgato*),

☉ **and dwell in lonely places** (*brūhetā suññā-gārānaṃ*).<sup>59</sup>

This is what The Buddha also refers to as the bhikkhu’s pursuits, his duties:<sup>60</sup>

**Three, bhikkhus, are these ascetic’s ascetic-pursuits** (*samaṇassa samaṇiyāni*), **ascetic duties** (*samaṇa-karaṇiyāni*). **What three?**

[1] **The higher-morality training-undertaking** (*adhi-sīla-sikkhā-samādānaṃ*) **[fulfilling the precepts],**

[2] **the higher-mind training-undertaking** (*adhi-citta-sikkhā-samādānaṃ*) **[being devoted to internal serenity of mind, not neglecting jhāna],**

[3] **the higher-wisdom training-undertaking** (*adhi-paññā-sikkhā-samādānaṃ*) **[being possessed of Vipassanā].**

This is what The Buddha means when He says we should develop the happiness of renunciation, the happiness of seclusion, the happiness of peace, and the happiness of enlightenment. It is, in other words, to develop the Noble Eight-fold Path, which with Samatha and Vipassanā culminates in Noble Right View (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*). With sufficient Vipassanā, we may then attain arahantship, and be possessed of the arahant’s Tenfold Path: the two culminating factors are then Right Knowledge (*Sammā Ñāṇaṃ*), and Right Liberation (*Sammā Vimutti*).<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> S.V.XII.i.1 ‘*Sacca Saṃyutta*’ (‘Truth Section’), ‘*Samādhi-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Concentration Sutta’)

<sup>58</sup> M.I.i.6 ‘*Ākaṅkheyya-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The “Should One Wish” Sutta’)

<sup>59</sup> The Buddha gives the same advice for the bhikkhu who wishes • to be dear and agreeable to his companions in the holy life • to obtain the requisites • to bring great fruit and benefit to those who provide him with the requisites • to bring great fruit and benefit to those who remember him with confidence • to overcome discontent and delight • to overcome fear and dread • to obtain the four jhānas that constitute the higher-mind training • to obtain the immaterial jhānas • to become a stream-enterer • to become a once-returner • to become a non-returner • to be able to exercise the psychic powers • to possess the divine ear • to read the minds of others • to recollect countless past lives • to possess the divine eye. (M.I.i.6 ‘*Ākaṅkheyya-Suttaṃ*’ (‘If a Bhikkhu Should Wish’))

<sup>60</sup> Quotation from A.III.II.iv.1 ‘*Samaṇa Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Ascetic Sutta’), details from A.III.II.iv.6-7 ‘*Paṭhama*...’ - ‘*Dutiya-Sikkhā Suttaṃ*’ (‘The First...’ - ‘Second Training Sutta’)

<sup>61</sup> For The Buddha’s explanation of the seven factors requisite for Right Concentration to be No-

The Buddha explains:<sup>62</sup>

- ☉ **And what, bhikkhus, are the things to be realized by direct knowledge?**  
**True knowledge and liberation** (*vijjā ca vimutti ca*).

That is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.

- ☉ **And what, bhikkhus, are the things to be developed by direct knowledge?**  
**Samatha and Vipassanā** (*Samatho ca Vipassanā ca*).

That is the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering.

Having thus developed the renunciative intention, we have developed the renunciative happiness, by which we may alight upon the top of the mountain: then do we know and see, perceive and are conscious of the ultimate renunciation, the Signless (*A-nimitta*): Nibbāna. The Buddha explains:<sup>63</sup>

- [1] He attends wisely: ‘This is suffering’;  
 [2] he attends wisely: ‘This is the origin of suffering’;  
 [3] he attends wisely: ‘This is the cessation of suffering’;  
 [4] he attends wisely: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.’

We have entered the stream, and are on our way to arahantship. The Buddha explains the arahant:<sup>64</sup>

**Having fully understood everything, he sees all signs differently.**

The Buddha explains the arahant further:

<p><b>Lustful intention is Man’s sensuality;</b>  <b>Sensuality is not the beautiful things in the world.</b>  <b>Lustful intention is Man’s sensuality;</b>  <b>The beautiful things just stand there in the world.</b>  <b>But the wise get rid of desire therein.</b></p>	<p><i>Saṅkapparāgo purisassa kāmo,</i>  <i>nete kāmā yāni citrāni loke.</i>  <i>Saṅkapparāgo purisassa kāmo,</i>  <i>tiññhanti citrāni tatheva loke;</i>  <i>athettha dhīrā vinayanti chandan’ti</i></p>
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Thank you.

ble Right Concentration, and His explanation of the arahant’s ninth and ten factors, please see, for example, M.III.ii.7 ‘*Mahā-Cattārīsaka-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Great Forty Sutta’)

<sup>62</sup> S.I.II.vi.11 ‘*Āgantuka-Suttaṃ*’ (‘The Inn Sutta’)

<sup>63</sup> M.I.i.2 ‘*Sabb-Āsava Sutta*’ (‘All the Taints Sutta’)

<sup>64</sup> S.IV.II.iii.7 ‘*Dutiya Avijjā Pahāna Sutta*’ (‘Second Ignorance Abandonment Sutta’)



## Is this the Dhamma-Vinaya? <sup>1</sup>

With the vast proliferation of teachings that profess to be the True Dhamma, there is understandably much confusion now (West and East) about how to decide whether a teaching accords with the Word of the Exalted One. Most of the modern solutions to this problem have, however, only exacerbated the confusion, for they are invariably rooted in a partial or misunderstood (sometimes very ‘learned’) reading of the Texts, and are otherwise most often rooted in something quite other than the Texts.

### THE FOUR GREAT REFERENCES

Needless to say, The Buddha foresaw this development. He predicted (rightly) that after five hundred years, the True Dhamma would be corrupted by the arising of a fake Dhamma. The Buddha also foresaw that the only way to slow down the inevitable corruption was to emphasize the importance of learning. This one may understand when referring to what The Buddha called the Four Great References<sup>2</sup> (*Cattāro Mahā-Padesā*):<sup>3</sup>

**These four, bhikkhus, great references I shall teach you: listen, pay good attention, and I shall speak....**

The four great references are:<sup>4</sup>

- 1) Reference to The Buddha (*Buddhā-padeso*)
- 2) Reference to a Sangha (*Saṅghā-padeso*)
- 3) Reference to several elders (*sambahula-ttherā-padeso*)
- 4) Reference to one elder (*eka-ttherā-padeso*)

The Buddha explains Reference to The Buddha Himself:

**Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu says thus:**

**‘From the mouth of the Exalted One (*sa-mmukhā Bhagavato*) I, friend, heard, from [His] mouth received it (*sa-mmukhā paṭiggahitaṃ*): “This is Dhamma (*ayaṃ Dhammo*), this is Vinaya (*ayaṃ Vinayo*), this is the Teacher’s Teaching (*idaṃ Satthu-Sāsanaṃ*).”**

**That utterance, bhikkhus, of the bhikkhu’s (*bhikkhuno bhāsitaṃ*) should neither be praised nor scorned (*neva abhinanditabbaṃ na-ppaṭikkosittabbaṃ*).**

**Neither praising it, nor scorning it, the phrase and letter (*pada-byañjanāni*) should be studied well (*sādhukaṃ uggahetvā*), reconciled with the suttas (*sutte osāretabbāni*), seen in relation to the Vinaya (*Vinaye sandassetabbāni*).<sup>5</sup>**

**If, when reconciled with the suttas and seen in relation to the Vinaya, it cannot be reconciled with suttas or seen in relation to the Vinaya, the conclusion must be: ‘Clearly, this is not the Exalted One’s**

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<sup>1</sup> This discussion was originally an appendix to *Modern Birth, Ageing, and Death*.

<sup>2</sup> REFERENCE: ‘referring of something for settlement to an authority. [POD]’ ‘the act of consulting someone or something in order to get information or advice. □ *This might be done without reference to Parliament... Please keep this sheet in a safe place for reference.* [CCED]’

<sup>3</sup> D.ii.3 ‘*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Great Parinibbāna Sutta’)

<sup>4</sup> *Khuddaka Nikāye, Netti-Ppakaraṇa (Guide Treatise)* iv.3. ‘*Yutti-Hāra-Vibhaṅgo*’ (‘Correct Category Analysis’)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.18 (122-124) explains that the sutta it should be referred to is the Four Noble Truths, and the Vinaya it should be seen in relation to is the one that counteracts lust, hatred, and delusion: in essence, dependent origination.

**Word** (*idaṃ na ceva tassa Bhagavato vacanaṃ*), but has been wrongly understood by that bhikkhu (*imassa ca bhikkhuno du-ggahitaṃ*).

**Thus that, bhikkhus, are you to reject** (*itihetaṃ, bhikkhave, chaḍḍeyyātha*).

**But if, it can be reconciled with the suttas and seen in relation to the Vinaya, the conclusion must be: 'Clearly, this is the Exalted One's Word** (*addhā, idaṃ tassa Bhagavato vacanaṃ*), and has been rightly understood by that bhikkhu (*imassa ca bhikkhuno su-ggahitaṃ*).

**This is, bhikkhus, the first Great Reference** (*idaṃ, bhikkhave, paṭhamaṃ mahāpadesaṃ*) **you are to re-member** (*dhāreyyātha*).

The first Great Reference is thus reference to The Buddha. But as we can see, The Buddha Himself makes The Buddha's Word depend on reference to the Dhamma: the suttas and Vinaya. This is what The Buddha means, when He says the Dhamma is independent of The Buddha.<sup>6</sup> The Buddha Himself takes the Dhamma as His reference:<sup>7</sup>

**Then let me [on] this very Dhamma to which I am fully awakened** (*mayā abhi-sambuddho*), **this very Dhamma having honoured** (*sakkatvā*), **reverence having done** (*garuṃ katvā*), **in dependence dwell** (*upanissāya viharatu*).

According to The Buddha, the veracity of The Buddha's Word depends again on reference to the Pali Texts. We are to depend not on so-called historical 'data', or so-called 'facts' about The Buddha, about the Pali Texts, about other texts, or any other such thing. Such reference is referring to idle speculation such as the academic subjects of history, linguistics, etc. We are well advised to leave such things severely alone, for they are at worst conducive to unfaith (a nutriment of ignorance),<sup>8</sup> at best perfectly irrelevant (a wild goose chase).<sup>9</sup>

Next, The Buddha explains the second Great Reference, reference to a community of bhikkhus, a Sangha:

**Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu says thus:**

**'In such&such a residence a community lives** (*saṅgho viharati*), **with elders and a chief** (*sa-thero sa-pāṃokkho*). **From that community's mouth I heard it, from [that community's] mouth I received it: "This is Dhamma** (*ayaṃ Dhammo*), **this is Vinaya** (*ayaṃ Vinayo*), **this is the Teacher's Teaching** (*idaṃ Satthu-sāsanaṃ*)."'

In this case too, The Buddha tells us to refer such a teaching to the Suttas and Vinaya, and if it does not conform, to reject it, and if it does, to accept it. The veracity of The Buddha's Word depends again on reference to the Pali Texts, not the individual community's practices, customs, etc.

Next, The Buddha explains the third Great Reference, reference to several elders:

**Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu says thus:**

<sup>6</sup> The Buddha explains: 'Whether there is the appearance of Tathagātas, or the non-appearance of Tathagātas, there exists this element, the fixity of the Dhamma, the natural order of the Dhamma: causality.' Please see quotation above, p.17.

<sup>7</sup> S.I.VI.i.2 'Gārava-Suttaṃ' ('Respect Sutta')

<sup>8</sup> For The Buddha's explanation of unfaith as a nutriment of ignorance, please see above, p.105. Wrong reference is discussed further in the continuance of this appendix.

<sup>9</sup> WILD-GOOSE CHASE: 'absurdly impossible quest [POD]'; 'foolish or hopeless search, eg for something or somebody that does not exist or can only be found elsewhere: *The hoaxer had sent the police on a wild-goose chase.* [OALD]'

**‘In such&such a residence several elder bhikkhus live (*sambahulā therā bhikkhū viharanti*), of great learning (*bahu-ssutā*), versed in the doctrine (*āgat-āgamā*), masters of the Dhamma (*Dhamma-dharā*), masters of the Vinaya (*Vinaya-dharā*), masters of the Matrices (*Mātikā-dharā*).<sup>10</sup>**

**‘From those elders’ mouth I heard it, from [those elders’] mouth I received it: “This is Dhamma (*ayaṃ Dhammo*), this is Vinaya (*ayaṃ Vinayo*), this is the Teacher’s Teaching (*idaṃ Satthu-sāsanam*).”**

Here too, The Buddha tells us to refer such a teaching to the Suttas and Vinaya, and if it does not conform, to reject it, and if it does, to accept it. The veracity of The Buddha’s Word depends again on the Pali Texts, not the elder bhikkhus, however senior they may be, however famous.

Lastly, The Buddha explains the fourth Great Reference, reference to one elder:

**Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu says thus: ‘In such&such a residence one elder bhikkhu lives (*eko therō bhikkhu viharati*), of great learning (*bahu-ssuto*), versed in the doctrine (*āgat-āgamo*), master of the Dhamma (*Dhamma-dhara*), master of the Vinaya (*Vinaya-dhara*), master of the Matrices (*Mātikā-dhara*).**

**‘From that elder’s mouth I heard it, from [that elder’s] mouth I received it: “This is Dhamma (*ayaṃ Dhammo*), this is Vinaya (*ayaṃ Vinayo*), this is the Teacher’s Teaching (*idaṃ Satthu-sāsanam*).”**

Here too, The Buddha tells us to refer such a teaching to the Suttas and Vinaya, and if it does not conform to reject it, if it does, to accept it. The veracity of The Buddha’s Word depends again on reference to the Pali Texts, not the elder bhikkhu, however senior he be, however ‘learned’, however famous.<sup>11</sup>

ONLY THE SUTTAS?

At the same time, of course, in the Suttas and Vinaya, The Buddha makes it abundantly clear that to refer to the four Great References requires that we are well familiar with the Pali Texts in their entirety. In some cases, it requires only elementary learning to know that a certain teaching can/cannot be referred to the Suttas and Vinaya: for example, practically no learning is required for one to understand that a bhikkhu cannot and should not accept, possess or use money under any form. Such knowledge is common knowledge among common, civilized people throughout the world. And by a merely casual reading of the suttas and Vinaya, we understand also that the bhikkhu and *sāmaṇera* must respect and be most scrupulous about their practice of every single precept laid down by The Buddha.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> OF GREAT LEARNING, VERSED IN THE DOCTRINE, ETC.: they are learned in the Vinaya, Suttas, and Abhidhamma. Please see explanation above, footnote 85, p.107.

<sup>11</sup> The Venerable Ācariya Dhammapāla, in his commentary to the *Netti-ppakaraṇa* (*Guide Treatise*) says about the question of origin: ‘How can it be known that the *Guide Treatise* is what was uttered by a chief disciple [the Venerable Mahākaccāyana, by The Buddha declared chief disciple in commentary]and approved by The Buddha? [It can be known] because it is text (*Pāli*): for there is no other criterion beyond a text, and any text not in contradiction under the four Great References to Authority is the criterion.... And anyway, why this investigation about a source, since there is no one else to whom to ascribe it [the *Guide Treatise*] except the elder [the Venerable Mahā-Kaccāyana]? What needs investigating here is only the meaning [in order to see] that it does not conflict with the texts.’ (*Guide Treatise* p.3: taken from *The Guide* (PTS), p.xi.)

<sup>12</sup> In the Vinaya, objections by scrupulous lay-people and bhikkhus are most often the reason why The Buddha lays down a precept, and never does He tell them not to be so fussy. In the suttas, The Buddha instructs the bhikkhus many times to the same effect. For example: ‘Accomplished

In more serious (or subtle) cases, however, referring to the four Great Authorities requires that we are, as The Buddha describes it, **of great learning, versed in the doctrine, master of the Dhamma, master of the Vinaya, master of the Matrices**. In other words, we have either seriously undertaken (and in the proper manner, with a properly qualified teacher) the threefold higher training, or we have completed it. How could anyone else be qualified?

It was such learned bhikkhus of the past who referred the individual suttas to the teachings as a whole, to show future generations of bhikkhus how to understand the suttas: they composed a commentary for each collection of texts. They are what we call the Venerable Teachers of the Commentaries (*Aṭṭhakathā-Ācariyā*).

Why were the commentaries deemed necessary? Because in a sutta, the Buddha does not give the details required for practice of His Teachings: that is the nature of suttas. Even in the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna-Suttaṃ*',<sup>13</sup> The Buddha does nowhere explain the practical details of how we develop mindfulness-of-breathing, how we develop jhāna with mindfulness-of-breathing,<sup>14</sup> nor does He in any sutta explain the practical details of how we develop jhāna with *mettā* (lovingkindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy), *upekkhā* (equanimity),<sup>15</sup> nor how we develop jhāna with the ten *kaṣiṇas*: we can from the suttas not even work out what a *kaṣiṇa* is.<sup>16</sup>

A very good example of this simple fact is the first sutta The Buddha taught, the '*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*' ('Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta').<sup>17</sup> He taught this sutta to the five ascetics with whom He had formerly practised austerities. One of the five, the Venerable Aññā Kondañña, became a stream-enterer at the conclusion of that sutta. Five days later, when the remaining four had also become stream-enterers, The Buddha taught them the '*An-Atta-Lakkhaṇa-Suttaṃ*' ('Non-Self Characteristic Sutta'), and all five became arahants.<sup>18</sup>

Now, what took place in the intervening five days? The Buddha explains:<sup>19</sup>

**Then I sometimes instructed two bhikkhus, while the other three went for alms, and the six of us**

in morality, bhikkhus, [do you] dwell, accomplished in the *Pātimokkha*; restrained with the restraint of the *Pātimokkha* [do you] dwell, accomplished in conduct and resort. Bewaring of the slightest faults (*aṇuṃattesu vajjesu bhaya-dassāvino*), undertake to train in the training precepts.' (for example, M.I.i.6 '*Ākaṅkheyya-Suttaṃ*' ('If One Should Wish'))

<sup>13</sup> D.II.9 '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta')

<sup>14</sup> Please see also S.V.X '*Ānāpāna-Samyutta*' ('In&Out-Breath Section')

<sup>15</sup> Please see, for example, M.II.i.2 '*Aṭṭhakanāgara-Suttaṃ*' (Aṭṭhakanāgara is where the sutta's audience comes from.)

<sup>16</sup> The Buddha explains: 'I have proclaimed to my disciples the way to develop the ten *kaṣiṇa* bases. One contemplates the earth-*kaṣiṇa* above, below, and across, undivided and immeasurable... [water-, fire-, wind-, blue-, yellow-, red-, white-, space-, consciousness-*kaṣiṇa*] and thereby many disciples of mine abide having reached the perfection and consummation of direct knowledge.' More detailed instructions are not forthcoming in the suttas. M.II.iii.7 '*Mahā-Sakuludāyī-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Sakuludāyīn Sutta') Sakuludāyī is a wanderer to whom The Buddha here explains all the practices owing to which their having practised His disciples honour and respect Him.)

<sup>17</sup> S.V.XII.ii.1

<sup>18</sup> For a quotation of the essence of this sutta, please see below, p.290.

<sup>19</sup> M.I.iii.6 '*Ariya-Pariyesanā-Suttaṃ*' ('Noble Search Sutta') (This sutta is also called '*Pāsa-Rāsi-Suttaṃ*' ('Mass of Snares Sutta'))

lived on what those three bhikkhus brought back from their almsround.

Sometimes I instructed three bhikkhus, while the other two went for alms, and the six of us lived on what those two bhikkhus brought back from their almsround.

Then the bhikkhus of the group of five, thus taught and instructed by Me... attained the unborn supreme security from bondage: Nibbāna.

The Buddha was teaching full-time: He was teaching the practice, was He not? But what was His full-time teaching in those five days? It is in no sutta explained. Why not? It is not sutta material. It is explained only in the Commentary to the sutta.

For an example of what is required for proper practice, we may refer to one of the many times when The Buddha explained to the Sangha how they should train. He said they should do so with the following thought:<sup>20</sup>

*'We shall be wise men, enquirers.'* (*Paṇḍitā bhavissāma vimaṃsakā'ti*)

And what does The Buddha mean by a wise man, a *paṇḍita*? He explained it to the Venerable Ānanda:

**When, Ānanda, a bhikkhu is in the elements skilled (*dhātu-kusalo*), is in the bases skilled (*āyatana-kusalo*), is in dependent origination skilled (*paṭiccasamuppāda-kusalo*), is in the possible and impossible skilled (*thān-āthāna-kusalo*), in that way he can be called a wise man and an enquirer.**

For us to understand how we should train, we need to understand these terms. Let us take just the first two, The Buddha's explanation of which elements and bases we need to know and see:

☉ **There are, Ānanda, these eighteen elements:**

- [1-3] **the eye element (*cakkhu-dhātu*), the colour element (*rūpa-dhātu*), the eye-consciousness element (*cakkhu-viññāṇa-dhātu*);**
- [4-6] **the ear element (*sota-dhātu*), the sound element (*sadda-dhātu*), the ear-consciousness element (*sota-viññāṇa-dhātu*);**
- [7-9] **the nose element (*ghāna-dhātu*), the odour element (*gandha-dhātu*), the nose-consciousness element (*ghāna-viññāṇa-dhātu*);**
- [10-12] **the tongue element (*jivhā-dhātu*), the flavour element (*rasa-dhātu*), the tongue-consciousness element (*jivhā-viññāṇa-dhātu*);**
- [13-15] **the body element (*kāya-dhātu*), the touch element (*phoṭṭhabba-dhātu*), the body-consciousness element (*kāyaviññāṇa-dhātu*);**
- [16-18] **the mind element (*mano-dhātu*), the element of other things (*dhamma-dhātu*), the mind-consciousness element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*).**

**When he knows and sees these eighteen elements, a bhikkhu can be called in the elements skilled.**

☉ **There are, Ānanda, these six elements:**

- [1] **the earth element (*pathavī-dhātu*),** [4] **the air element (*vāyo-dhātu*),**
- [2] **the water element (*āpo-dhātu*),** [5] **the space element (*ākāsa-dhātu*),**
- [3] **the fire element (*tejo-dhātu*),** [6] **the consciousness element (*viññāṇa-dhātu*)...**

<sup>20</sup> M.III.ii.5 '*Bahu-Dhātuka-Suttaṃ*' As an introduction to this teaching, The Buddha explains the fool versus the wise man: '...the fool brings fear, the wise man brings no fear; the fool brings trouble, the wise man brings no trouble; the fool brings calamity, the wise man brings no calamity.' The calamity that the fool brings is that, owing to his not having known or seen the elements, bases, dependent origination, etc., he leads astray those who associate with him, and vice-versa the wise man. Please see below, footnote 86, p.306, and footnote 87, p.306.



When he knows and sees these six elements, a bhikkhu can be called in the elements skilled.

☉ There are, Ānanda, these six elements:

- [1] the pleasure element (*sukha-dhātu*), [4] the grief element (*domanassa-dhātu*),  
 [2] the pain element (*dukkha-dhātu*), [5] the equanimity element (*upekkhā-dhātu*),  
 [3] the joy element (*somanassa-dhātu*), [6] the ignorance element (*avijjā-dhātu*)...

When he knows and sees these six elements, a bhikkhu can be called in the elements skilled.

☉ There are, Ānanda, these six elements:

- [1-2] the sensual element (*kāma-dhātu*), the renunciative element (*nekkhamma-dhātu*),  
 [3-4] the ill-intention element (*byāpāda-dhātu*); the good-intention element (*abyāpāda-dhātu*),  
 [4-5] the harmful-intention element (*vihiṃsā-dhātu*), the harmless-intention element (*avihiṃsā-dhātu*).

When he knows and sees these six elements, a bhikkhu can be called in the elements skilled.

☉ There are, Ānanda, these three elements: the sensual element (*kāma-dhātu*), the material element (*rūpa-dhātu*), the immaterial element (*a-rūpa-dhātu*).

When he knows and sees these three elements, a bhikkhu can be called in the elements skilled.

☉ There are, Ānanda, these two elements: the conditioned element (*saṅkhatā-dhātu*), the unconditioned element (*asaṅkhatā-dhātu*).

When he knows and sees these two elements, a bhikkhu can be called in the elements skilled.

That is The Buddha's explanation of what skill is required for wisdom in the elements. Then the bases:

There are, Ānanda, these six internal and external bases (*ajjhattika-bāhirāni āyatanāni*):

- [1-2] the eye and colour (*cakkhu-c-eva rūpā ca*),  
 [3-4] the ear and sounds (*sotañ-ca saddā ca*),  
 [5-6] the nose and odours (*ghānañ-ca gandhā ca*),  
 [7-8] the tongue and flavours (*jivhā ca rasā ca*),  
 [9-10] the body and touches (*kāyo ca phoṭṭhabbā ca*),  
 [11-12] the mind and other objects (*mano ca dhammā ca*).

When he knows and sees these six internal and external bases, a bhikkhu can be called in the bases skilled.

What does it mean to know and see these elements and bases? It means that we have known and seen them one by one, and known and seen that they arise and pass away, that they are impermanent, suffering and non-self. That is what The Buddha calls Vipassanā. But how are we to know what these elements and bases are exactly, and how are we to know how we may know and see them? In this sutta, The Buddha explains the elements and bases no further.

What then is the eye element? What is the difference between the eye element and the eye base? Are they the eye perhaps? The kindergarten-teacher asks the little boy what 'eye' is, and the little boy points at his eye, and says: 'This is my eye!' <sup>21</sup> Is that all we need to know to practise Vipassanā on the eye? In that case our object for Vipassanā would be a kindergarten concept, which means we might as well simplify things further, and reduce the Buddha's eightfold path to an only sevenfold path, for jhāna would in that case be superfluous. In that case too, the Dhamma can be nothing other than self-evident, easy to see, easy to understand, trivial, conceptual and banal, attainable by mere inference and rea-

<sup>21</sup> This simile was given to the author by a lay-disciple of The Buddha.

soning, simplistic and gross, to be experienced by children in the kindergarten.

The Buddha's understanding of the Dhamma is different:<sup>22</sup>

**This Dhamma that I have attained is profound, difficult to see, and difficult to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise.**

Even children in the kindergarten know that if we put our finger on our eye, we can feel the touch. But they do not know that according to The Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, touch is not cognized through the eye base, touch is cognized through the body base.<sup>23</sup> Then where is the eye base?

Can we find the answer in another sutta? If we look at all the remaining suttas that exist, we find The Buddha very many times and in many ways explain that the elements and internal/external bases need to be known and seen for there to be enlightenment. But can we find The Buddha explain the eye element and the eye base in a sutta? No. Even if we study the suttas for a thousand years, we are not going to find such things explained in any sutta.

But The Buddha says mind-matter are the condition for the six bases.<sup>24</sup> So if we do not know what the six bases are, how can we understand dependent origination? We cannot, and we will never find the information in a sutta: it is simply not sutta material. If we go to the computer-shop to buy a banana, we will not succeed in our endeavour: computer-shops do not sell bananas. If we think we can get enlightened by going only to the suttas, we will not succeed in our endeavour, for the suttas do not give detailed information regarding the ultimate realities referred to by the Buddha. By looking only at the suttas, we can impossibly know and see the ultimate realities that The Buddha discusses,<sup>25</sup> and by

<sup>22</sup> Please see more extended quotation above, p. 39. (M.I.iii.6 '*Ariya-Pariyesanā-Suttaṃ*' ('Noble Search Sutta')) (This sutta is also called '*Pāsa-Rāsi-Suttaṃ*' ('Mass of Snares Sutta'))

<sup>23</sup> The Buddha explains: 'Dependent on the body and touches, there arises body consciousness: with the meeting of the three, there is contact' (in this case body contact). Please see further above, p.69.

<sup>24</sup> Please see above quotation, p.71

<sup>25</sup> One may indeed be possessed of sufficient ('inherited') wisdom to attain a path or fruition by listening to only a sutta. But such understanding depends on one's superior practice in the past, having learned the abstruse Dhamma, and having known and seen ultimate mind-matter and their causes: the sutta alone is insufficient. Thus, for example, The Buddha did not become Buddha owing solely to the meditation He undertook on the night of His enlightenment, but owing to that practice supported by superior practice in past lives. As such, this elementary understanding of kamma and its result is not explained in the suttas, but in the commentaries. For example, The Buddha explains: 'In the past having made merit... This is a blessing supreme.' (Sn.ii.4 '*Maṅgala-Suttaṃ*' ('Blessing Sutta')) (also Kh.v.5)) And the commentary explains: 'The fact of having in past births accumulated wholesome [kamma] contingent upon Buddhas and Paccekabuddhas, and those with taints exhausted [arahants] is called in the past having made merit. That is a blessing too. Why? Because, after seeing a Buddha or a Paccekabuddha face-to-face, or after hearing even a four-line stanza in the presence of a Buddha or His disciple, Arahantship can be reached in the end. And when a human being has had previous practice so that the root of what is profitable is prominent in him, then by means of that same root of what is profitable, he arouses insight and so reaches the exhaustion of the taints....' The accumulation of kamma aimed at enlightenment is what the commentaries call the *pāramī*. Please see also The Buddha's explanation of why some people are wise and others not (M.III.iv.5 '*Cūḷa-Kamma-Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ*' ('Small Kamma Analysis Sutta')) And further, for example: 'I do not, bhikkhus, say that final knowledge is achieved all at once. On the contrary, final knowledge is achieved by gradual training, by gradual practice, by gradual progress.' (M.II.ii.10 '*Kīṭāgiri-Suttaṃ*' (Kīṭāgiri is a town)) The Buddha's perspective

impossibly knowing and seeing the ultimate realities that He discusses, we can impossibly know the Unformed ultimate reality: Nibbāna.

Another example is the five aggregates: they are not peripheral to the Teaching or the practice of the Teaching, they are central. The Buddha says very clearly throughout His Teaching that the five aggregates must be known and seen for there to be enlightenment. For example:<sup>26</sup>

**And what things should be fully understood by direct knowledge (*abhiññā pariññeyyā*)?**

**The answer to that is: the five clinging-aggregates (*pañc-upādāna-kkhandhā*). That is,**

- [1] **the matter clinging-aggregate (*rūp-upādāna-kkhandho*),**
- [2] **The sensation clinging-aggregate (*vedan-upādāna-kkhandho*),**
- [3] **The perception clinging-aggregate (*saññ-upādāna-kkhandho*),**
- [4] **The formation clinging-aggregate (*saṅkhār-upādāna-kkhandho*),**
- [5] **The consciousness clinging-aggregate (*viññāṇ-upādāna-kkhandho*).**

And having read the suttas, we know what He means by the aggregates. We know He explains matter as the four elements (earth-, water-, fire- and air element), and derived matter.<sup>27</sup> But in the suttas, The Buddha does not explain how we see the four elements and derived matter: He does not even explain what derived matter is. So, how are we to know and see the four elements and derived matter? And if we have not known and seen the four elements and derived matter, how can we know what the matter aggregate is? In that case, says the Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, we are incapable of **growth, increase and fulfilment** in the Dhamma-Vinaya.<sup>28</sup>

And sensation? The Buddha explains sensation:<sup>29</sup>

- **I have stated two kinds of sensation in one presentation;**
- **I have stated three kinds of sensation in another presentation;**
- **I have stated five kinds of sensation in another presentation;**
- **I have stated six kinds of sensation in another presentation;**
- **I have stated eighteen kinds of sensation in another presentation;**
- **I have stated thirty-six kinds of sensation in another presentation.**
- **I have stated one hundred and eight kinds of sensation in another presentation.**

**That is how the Dhamma has been shown by me in presentations.**

We may by referring to the suttas be able to differentiate between the one hundred and eight kinds of sensation in theory: for example, we may understand that the one hundred and eight kinds of sensation are the thirty-six kinds of sensation in the past, thirty-six in the future, and thirty-six in the present.<sup>30</sup> But in practice? And how do we know exactly what perception is? How do we know how to differentiate (in theory and practice) between sensation, perception and consciousness? In the suttas it is explained that they arise together:<sup>31</sup>

is, of course, never restricted to one life. Please see also below footnote 61, p.299, and footnote 88, p.306.

<sup>26</sup> M.III.v.7 '*Mahā-Saḷ-Āyatanika-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Sixfold-Base Sutta')

<sup>27</sup> Please see above quotation, p.71.

<sup>28</sup> Please see quotation above, p.28.

<sup>29</sup> M.II.i.9 '*Bahu-Vedaniya-Suttaṃ*' ('Many Kinds of Sensation Sutta')

<sup>30</sup> e.g. S.IV.iii.2 '*Aṭṭha-Sata-Suttaṃ*' ('Eight [& a] Hundred Sutta')

<sup>31</sup> Please see above quotation, p.84.

that means when there are one hundred and eight different kinds of sensation, there are also one hundred and eight different kinds of perception, and one hundred and eight different kinds of consciousness: three hundred and twenty-four different kinds of mental formation, apart from the mental formations that are grouped under the formations aggregate. Can we find the answer in a sutta? No.

And the different kinds of consciousness that The Buddha says we must know and see? For example, in the *Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna Sutta*:<sup>32</sup>

Again, bhikkhus, how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating consciousness as consciousness? Here, bhikkhus,

- [1-2] a bhikkhu understands (*pojānāti*) a consciousness associated with lust as a consciousness associated with lust (*sarāga citta*); he understands a consciousness dissociated from lust as a consciousness dissociated from lust (*vītarāga citta*).
- [3-4] He understands a consciousness associated with hatred as a consciousness associated with hatred (*sadosa citta*); he understands a consciousness dissociated from hatred as a consciousness dissociated from hatred (*vītadosa citta*).
- [5-6] He understands a consciousness associated with delusion as a consciousness associated with delusion (*samoha citta*); he understands a consciousness dissociated from delusion as a consciousness dissociated from delusion (*vītamoha citta*).
- [7-8] He understands a contracted consciousness as a contracted consciousness (*saṃkhitṭa citta*); he understands a distracted consciousness as a distracted consciousness (*vikkhitṭa citta*).
- [9-10] He understands an exalted consciousness as an exalted consciousness (*mahaggata citta*); he understands an unexalted consciousness as an unexalted consciousness (*amahaggata citta*).
- [11-12] He understands a surpassed consciousness as a surpassed consciousness (*sa-uttara citta*); he understands an unsurpassed consciousness as an unsurpassed consciousness (*anuttara citta*).
- [13-14] He understands a concentrated consciousness as a concentrated consciousness (*samāhita citta*); he understands an unconcentrated consciousness as an unconcentrated consciousness (*asamāhita citta*).
- [15-16] He understands a liberated consciousness as a liberated consciousness (*vimuttaṃ citta*); he understands an unliberated consciousness as an unliberated consciousness (*avimuttaṃ citta*).

Thus, he abides contemplating consciousness as consciousness internally (*ajjhataṃ*), or he abides contemplating consciousness as consciousness externally (*bahiddhā*), or he abides contemplating consciousness as consciousness both internally and externally.

What does all this mean? We may be able to work out from the suttas what the different terms mean, but how to see the ultimate realities? And what does internally/externally mean? The Buddha explains:<sup>33</sup>

Therefore, bhikkhus, any whatsoever materiality (*yaṃ kiñci rūpaṃ*),

[1-3] past, future or present (*atīta-nāgata-paccuppannaṃ*),

[4-5] internal or external (*ajjhataṃ vā bahiddhā vā*),

[6-7] gross or subtle (*oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumāṃ vā*),

[8-9] inferior or superior (*hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā*),

[10-11] far or near (*yaṃ dūre santike vā*);

all [this] materiality (*sabbaṃ rūpaṃ*) 'This is not mine (*n-etaṃ mama*), this I am not (*n-eso-hamasmi*), this is not my self (*na m-eso attā*): thus, as it truly is (*evam-etaṃ yathā-bhūtaṃ*), with Right Wisdom (*Samma-Ppaññāya*) should be seen (*daṭṭhabbaṃ*).

<sup>32</sup> D.II.9 'Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna-Suttaṃ' ('Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta') (Also M.I.i.10)

<sup>33</sup> S.III.I.II.i.7 'An-Atta-Lakkhaṇa Suttaṃ' ('Non-Self Characteristic Sutta')

And He repeats His explanation for the remaining four aggregates:

**Any whatsoever feelings** (*yā kāci vedanā*), **past, future or present... all feelings** (*atīt-ānāgata-paccuppannaṃ...sabbā vedanā*).... **Any whatsoever perceptions** (*yā kāci saññā*) **past, future or present... all perceptions** (*atīt-ānāgata-paccuppannaṃ... sabbā saññā*).... **Any whatsoever formations** (*yā kāci saṅkhārā*), **past, future or present... all formations** (*atīt-ānāgata-paccuppannaṃ... sabbe saṅkhārā*).... **Any whatsoever consciousness** (*yāṃ kiñci viññāṇa*) **past, future or present... all consciousness** (*atīt-ānāgata-paccuppannaṃ... sabbāṃ viññāṇaṃ*) ‘**This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self**, thus, as it truly is, with right wisdom, should be seen.

If we read the suttas, we see that when The Buddha says five aggregates, He means always these eleven kinds of five aggregates.<sup>34</sup> That makes fifty-five aggregates that need to be known and seen with direct knowledge, with Right Wisdom. But if we study only the suttas and Vinaya, we are not going to find The Buddha explain these eleven aggregates. Then how can we know the five aggregates, if we do not even know what they are in theory? And how are we going to know how to see the eleven kinds of five aggregates? And our five aggregates of past lives? They need to be known and seen. They cannot be known by pure inference, for we cannot practise Vipassanā on inferred mind and inferred matter, or any other such concepts: concepts are mind-made, and are themselves neither mind nor matter. The Buddha explains it to a wanderer He addressed as Kaccāna:<sup>35</sup>

**If any, Kaccāna, ascetics and brahmins, without knowing the past** (*a-jānantā pubbantam*), **without seeing the future** (*a-passantā aparantam*), **‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived** (*khīṇā jāti vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ*), **what had to be done has been done** (*katam karaṇiyaṃ*), **there is no more coming into any state of being’** (*nāparam itthattāyāti*)’ **claim** (*paṭijjānti*), **such with this, in accordance with the Dhamma** (*tesam soyeva saha-dhammiko*) **are confuted** (*niggaho hoti*).

We cannot know the past five aggregates or see the future five aggregates by inference, for we cannot practise Vipassanā on inferences. Nonetheless, we may claim that we know and see and practise Vipassanā, and claim that we know and see the impermanence, suffering and non-self of the five aggregates according to The Buddha’s instructions in the suttas: does our talk in that case not amount to blatantly self-contradictory and misleading folly? ‘Folly’ is a soft translation of the phrase *appāṭihīra-kataṃ*,<sup>36</sup> used by The Buddha to describe teachings that derive from mere concepts, speculation and inference.

The Buddha uses this word in connection with the teachings of the wanderer called Sakuludāyin. The Buddha had asked Sakuludāyin please to explain his teachers’ teachings, and Sakuludāyin said they taught:<sup>37</sup>

**This is the perfect splendour! This is the perfect splendour!**

Then The Buddha asked him what that was, and Sakuludāyin explained:

**Venerable Sir, that splendour is the perfect splendour, which is unsurpassed by any other splendour higher or more sublime.**

<sup>34</sup> For another example, please see extended quotation above, p.34.

<sup>35</sup> M.II.iii.10 ‘*Vekhanassa-Suttaṃ*’ (Vekhanassa is the wanderer’s name)

<sup>36</sup> *a-pāṭihīra-kataṃ*: *a-ppāṭihīrakathā* = stupid talk (PED)

<sup>37</sup> M.II.iii.9 ‘*Cūḷa-Sakuludāyi-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Small Sakuludāyin Sutta’)

Then The Buddha asked him what that was, and Sakuludāyin explained:

**Venerable Sir, that splendour is the perfect splendour, which is unsurpassed by any other splendour higher or more sublime.**

He repeated his idle concepts. And then The Buddha analysed his teaching:

**Udāyin, you might continue for a long time in this way.**

**You say: 'Venerable Sir, that splendour is the perfect splendour, which is unsurpassed by any other splendour higher or more sublime,' yet you do not indicate what that splendour is.**

This may be compared to our teaching that we must practise according to the suttas, and that according to the suttas we must know and see the elements, bases and five aggregates, yet when someone asks us please to explain what the elements and bases are, what the five aggregates are, we merely repeat the concepts, repeat The Buddha's words:<sup>38</sup> **in just this fathom-long carcass endowed with perception and mind.**<sup>39</sup> When further questioned as to how and where, we merely repeat the concepts. And when asked to explain the difference between perception and mind, we again repeat the concepts. Does such talk not amount to folly?

**Suppose a man were to say: 'I am in love with the most beautiful girl in the country.'**

**Then they would ask him: 'Good man, that most beautiful girl in the country with whom you are in love: do you know whether she is from the noble class, or the Brahmin class, or the merchant class or the worker class?', and he would reply: 'No.'**

**Then they would ask him: 'Good man, that most beautiful girl in the country with whom you are in love: do you know her name and clan?'... whether she is tall or short or of middle height?'... whether she is swarthy- or dusky- or fair-skinned?'... what village or town or city she lives in?' and he would reply: 'No.'**

**And then they would ask him: 'Good man, do you then love a girl whom you have never known or seen?' and he would reply: 'Yes.'**

**What do you think, Udāyin, that being so, would not that man's talk amount to folly?**

Not knowing and not seeing is not The Buddha's way, or the way of his sons, the bhikkhus: enlightenment is not achieved with folly.

The Buddha explains how the bhikkhu investigates the eleven kinds of five aggregates with direct knowledge and Right Wisdom:<sup>40</sup>

**whatever kind of matter [sensation, perception, formations, consciousness] there is, whether past, future, or present; internal or external; gross or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near, a bhikkhu sees it, contemplates it, and carefully investigates it.**

This can hardly be said to constitute inference; we can impossibly sit in meditation and see, contemplate, and carefully investigate the five aggregates as concepts.

The Buddha explains the things He teaches. They are, says He:<sup>41</sup>

**things of which I have direct knowledge.**

<sup>38</sup> S.I.II.iii.6 '*Rohitassa-Suttam*' (Rohitassa is the deva who is The Buddha's interlocutor.)

<sup>39</sup> CARCASS: mere body (POD). This means we must know and see the difference between mind and perception, etc. We must know and see mind, matter (and derived matter), sensation, perception, formations and consciousness, etc.

<sup>40</sup> Please see extended quotation above, p.34f.

<sup>41</sup> Please see extended quotation above, p.112f.

It is better for us not to think that The Buddha's enlightenment constituted only conceptual knowledge: to think such a thing is plain and simple wrong view.<sup>42</sup>

#### THE *Ti-Piṭaka*

Let us then investigate the five aggregates further. They are all formations (*saṅkhārā*), because the only unformed element (*a-saṅkhatā-dhātu*) is Nibbāna.<sup>43</sup> The five aggregates are:

- 1) the matter aggregate (*rūpa-kkhandha*) = formations of matter (*rūpa*)
- 2) the sensation aggregate (*vedanā-kkhandha*) = formations of mind (*nāma*)
- 3) the perception aggregate (*saññā-kkhandha*) = formations of mind (*nāma*)
- 4) the formations aggregate (*saṅkhāra-kkhandha*) = formations of mind (*nāma*)
- 5) the consciousness aggregate (*viññāṇa-kkhandha*) = formations of mind (*nāma*)

The five aggregates are formations of matter (*rūpa*) and mind (*nāma*): they cannot be formations of anything else, for there is nothing else to form.

So what is the difference between the formations of mind called formations and the other formations of mind? Can we find the answer explained in a sutta? No. Can we with reference to a sutta sit down in meditation and know and see the elements of each aggregate? If our knowledge of the five aggregates is merely vague, uncertain, conceptual knowledge, can we sit down in meditation and know and see them? Vague, uncertain, conceptual knowledge, does not make it possible for us to achieve **growth, increase and fulfilment in the Dhamma-Vinaya**, which means it is impossible for us to attain Nibbāna.<sup>44</sup>

So, what to do? What did The Buddha say upon His deathbed? He said:<sup>45</sup>

*Yo vo, Ānanda, mayā dhammo ca vinayo ca desito paññatto, so vo mamaccayena satthā.*

**That to you, Ānanda, Dhamma-Vinaya by Me taught and made known, that shall at my death be your teacher**

Where do we find the Dhamma? In the so-called Three Baskets (*Ti-Piṭaka*): not in one basket, not in two baskets, but in three baskets.

Did The Buddha arrange His Teachings into the Three Baskets? Did He organize all His Teachings into groupings and collections, chapter, page and number? What do you think?

Does The Buddha in the '*Mahā-Pari-Nibbāna-Suttaṃ*' say to the Venerable Ānanda: 'And, Ānanda, this sutta, beginning from the time we talked to the King Ajātasattu about the Vajjians, and ending with the distribution of my relics, must go into the collection of long suttas, "*The Dīgha Nikāya*", as sutta number three in the second chapter, before the "*Mahā-Sudassana-Suttaṃ*", after the "*Mahā-Nidāna-Suttaṃ*"?' Please read the sutta, and you will know whether The Buddha says any such thing.

We should be well advised not to think that a perfectly enlightened Buddha engages in such clerical work. He is The Buddha: He speaks spontaneously, in

<sup>42</sup> Please see quotation above, footnote 39, p.99.

<sup>43</sup> FORMATIONS: see discussion above, p.94.

<sup>44</sup> Please see extended quotation above, p.28.

<sup>45</sup> D.ii.3 '*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta')

whatever language is appropriate at the time of speaking.<sup>46</sup> That is why we cannot in the suttas either find Him explain semantics and grammar: a Buddha's job is not to teach rhetoric: a Buddha's job is to use His superior rhetorical skills to teach suffering and the end of suffering. The king does not explain the procedure for filling out a form at the post-office, nor even does the Post-Master General, or the postmaster: that is the clerk's job. With a matter as profound as the Dhamma, the only clerks who could fathom the procedure of putting an end to birth, ageing and death were those who had completed the procedure: the learned elders and arahants.

The work of organizing the Abhidhamma was done by the Venerable Sāriputta, chief disciple of all disciples, second only to The Buddha, and by The Buddha declared as His foremost son.<sup>47</sup> Since the Venerable Sāriputta passed away before The Buddha did, he was not involved in organizing the Teachings as a whole at the First Council: the First Council was convened under the Venerable Mahā-Kassapa.

How did they organize the vast body of Teachings? They organized the Teachings into three divisions: Vinaya, Sutta and Abhidhamma.

- 1) The Vinaya does not explain the suttas and Abhidhamma, although it does refer to them.
- 2) The suttas do not explain the Vinaya and Abhidhamma, although they do refer to them.
- 3) The Abhidhamma does not explain the Vinaya, but in the analyses (*vibhāṅga*), it speaks of the Suttanta classification (*Suttanta-bhājanīyaṃ*), and the Abhidhamma classification (*Abhidhamma-bhājanīyaṃ*). That way, one may understand the ultimate meaning of the terms used by The Buddha in the suttas.

That is how the Pali Texts are organized, and that is how we have received them from the treasurers of the Dhamma: that is not how The Buddha organized them, for The Buddha did not organize the Texts: He taught suffering and end of suffering.

Let us then discuss the three divisions of the Pali Texts further.

- 1) The Vinaya gives detailed explanations and analyses of the bhikkhu's discipline as explained by The Buddha: the bhikkhu's discipline as such is not explained and analysed in the suttas. Nonetheless, if we study the suttas, we understand that The Buddha (over and over and over again) says bhikkhus must learn and practise the Vinaya in its entirety, and at all times. Thus, by studying the suttas we understand that even though the suttas and

<sup>46</sup> The Buddha explains to Prince Abhāya: 'So too, prince, when learned noblemen, learned Brahmins, learned householders, and learned ascetics, after formulating a question, then come to the Tathāgata and pose it, the answer occurs to the Tathāgata on the spot.' (M.II.i.8 '*Abhaya-Rāja-Kumāra-Suttam*' ('Prince Abhaya Sutta'))

<sup>47</sup> The Buddha explains: 'Rightly speaking, bhikkhus, were it to be said of anyone: "He is the son of the Exalted One, born of His breast, born of His mouth, born of the Dhamma, created by the Dhamma, an heir in the Dhamma, not an heir in material things [robes, food, dwelling (incl. monastery, statues and stupas, etc.), and medicine]," it is of Sāriputta indeed that right speaking this should be said. The matchless, bhikkhus, wheel of Dhamma set in motion by the Tathāgata is kept moving rightly be Sāriputta.' (M.III.ii.1 '*Anupada-Suttam*' ('One-by-One Sutta'))



Vinaya are separate, they can in practice not be separated. Expertise in the suttas can impossibly exclude expertise and supreme respect for and practice of the Vinaya.

- 2) The suttas provide, so to speak, the procedure for training, for the practice: they are guidelines given by the Buddha. That is, what needs to be done, what needs to be understood, etc., in order that we may understand the Four Noble Truths and become enlightened: by studying the suttas, we understand the entire structure of the path towards enlightenment. By studying the suttas, we understand that we must observe the Vinaya very strictly; we understand that we must meditate and study; that we must know the meaning (in theory and practice) of, for example, the eighteen elements and the five aggregates, which means we must study also the Abhidhamma, and when we have any doubts (which we can impossibly not have until we have ourselves become learned), we refer to the learned elders of the past, their commentaries, sub-commentaries, and sub-sub-commentaries: how lucky we are. Until we are enlightened, our understanding that this procedure needs to be followed is governed by our faith in The Buddha, our faith in the threefold procedure He gives in the suttas: morality, concentration and wisdom.
- 3) The Abhidhamma discusses ultimate things: the ultimate elements of mind-matter in all their combinations, as seen and explained by The Buddha. These are the things that we need to know and see in order that we may become enlightened.

So, where do we go for information about the elements and the bases? We go not to the Vinaya, not to the suttas, but to the Abhidhamma: that is where they are explained. If we want bananas, we go to the fruit market; if we want a computer, we go to the computer shop. It does not require immense erudition to understand such simple facts.

#### TEXT AND PRACTICE

Then what do we do if we want to put the procedure explained in the suttas into such practice that we can see the ultimate realities that we must see? How do we bring the concepts to life? There is a vast body of commentaries composed by learned bhikkhus of the past, who explained the practice in detail, from their own experience and from the experience of others. What was the source for their practice? The Buddha's enlightened instructions. What else?

How did these commentaries come about? At the first council the Texts were divided into the three divisions, and then allotted to groups of learned bhikkhus to recite, order and explain. That is why we find a commentary for each book: from the reciters of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (*Dīgha-bhāṇakā*), of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (*Majjhima-bhāṇakā*), the *Samyutta Nikāya* (*Samyutta-bhāṇakā*), the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (*Aṅguttara-bhāṇakā*), etc. When we study the commentaries, we see other commentaries referred to, and sometimes there will be a difference in the letter, maybe the explanation of the same thing will be from another angle, but as a whole **the meaning and the phrasing of one commentary and the other commentary coincide**

and agree with each other, and do not diverge, that is, in regard to the chief matter.<sup>48</sup> The distinctions we need to make between one kind of explanation and the other are namely the very subtle and difficult to see distinction between letter and spirit. With insufficient faith and learning, we may end up making distinctions where there are none to be made, and fail to make distinctions when there are distinctions to be made.<sup>49</sup> The Buddha explains:<sup>50</sup>

**Those bhikkhus, bhikkhus, who wrongly understand the suttas** (*bhikkhū du-ggahitehi suttantehi*), **interpret according to the letter** (*byañjana-ppatirūpakehi*), **with the meaning [spirit] and the Dhamma contend** (*atthañ-ca dhammañ-ca paṭivāhanti*).

**Those bhikkhus, bhikkhus, practise** (*paṭipannā*), **for the many's harm** (*bahu-jana-a-hitāya*), **for the many's unhappiness** (*bahu-jana-a-sukkhāya*), **for the many's ill** (*bahunō janassa anathāya*), **for the harm, and suffering of devas and men** (*a-hitāya dukkhāya deva-manussānaṃ*).

**And much** (*bahuñ-ca*) **do those bhikkhus, bhikkhus, demerit generate** (*a-puññaṃ pasavanti*), **and bring about the disappearance of this True Dhamma** (*Sa-Ddhamma*).

This most regrettable kind of misconduct takes place when there is insufficient understanding and knowledge about what The Buddha means in the suttas: insufficient application of the Four Great References, and insufficient qualification to apply the Four Great References.<sup>51</sup> When, however, there is faithful and continuous reference to the learned elders of the past, this misconduct does not take place, for they, the Venerable Teachers of the Commentaries (*Aṭṭha-kath-Ācariyā*) explain very clearly where and which distinctions are to be made and not to be made. (What we translate as ‘commentary’ is in fact ‘meaning (*aṭṭha*) explanation/exposition/commentary (*katha*)’).

Who are those Venerable Commentary-Teachers? They are the watering-place for those of us who seek to drink enthusiasm for the meaning, those of us who seek to drink enthusiasm for the Dhamma, those of us who seek to drink Dhamma-related joy, for the Venerable Commentary Teachers are:<sup>52</sup>

**of great learning, versed in the doctrine, masters of the Dhamma, masters of the Vinaya, masters of**

<sup>48</sup> The quoted phrases are the wanderer Vacchagotta’s description of how The Buddha’s and His disciple the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna’s answers to the same question are the same, that is, with regard to what matters (S.IV.I.x.7 ‘*Moggallāna-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Moggallāna Sutta’)).

<sup>49</sup> The Buddha explains: ‘Those who in the faultless find fault, and in the faulty see no fault, upholding wrong views, these people go to an unhappy state.’ (Dhp.xxii.12 & 13 ‘*Niraya Vagga*’ (‘Hell Chapter’))

<sup>50</sup> A.II.iv ‘*Sama-Citta Vaggo*’ (‘Tranquil Mind Chapter’)

<sup>51</sup> The Buddha explains also that such bhikkhus will pronounce Dhamma and Non-Dhamma. For example, they will with either unqualified or no reference to the Four Great References pronounce a particular passage, sutta, even book or collection as Non-Dhamma: please see above quotation, p.108. For examples of such wrong understanding and contention, please see above footnote 18, p.94, and footnote 50, p.100 (regarding confusion between the letter and spirit of the term *saṅkhāra* <formation>), as well as footnote 57, p.297 (regarding confusion about the meaning of the word ‘body’ (*kāya*) in the context of mindfulness-of-breathing). And for The Buddha’s detailed advice regarding such wrangling, please see M.III.i.3 ‘*Kinti-Suttaṃ*’. There, The Buddha advises the bhikkhus to ask one another: “‘But friend, without abandoning that thing [wrangling], can one realize Nibbāna?’” Answering rightly, the bhikkhu would answer thus: “‘Friend, without abandoning that thing, one cannot realize Nibbāna.’” This is again why the Four Great References were laid down: to help bhikkhus still to be able to realize Nibbāna.

<sup>52</sup> Please see quotation above, p.107.

### the Matrices.

What do they do in their commentaries? They help us to:

**rightly understand the suttas** (*su-ggahitehi suttantehi*), **[to] interpret according to the letter** (*byañjana-ppatirūpakehi*), **[to] with the meaning [spirit] and the Dhamma conform** (*atthañ-ca dhammañ-ca anulomenti*).

Who, pray, is going to understand the suttas any better? The bhikkhus who recited the suttas at the First Council, organized them into the Three Baskets, and then composed the different books, who still had the Buddha's voice ringing in their ears, did they not know best what the suttas mean? Were they not the first and foremost equipped to apply the Four Great References? And by reference to which of the Four Great References can we say that their learned commentaries cannot be reconciled with The Buddha's Teachings?

And what conceivable reason could there be to think that at the First Council, so soon after The Buddha's Parinibbāna, the then still living bhikkhus, learned, accomplished, many arahants, had said and explained all that could and should be explained? Does the learnedness and skill of a bhikkhu depend on the living body and presence of a Buddha? Such an idea cannot be found in the Dhamma-Vinaya.

There are two paths we can take. One is the path of conceit, own views and opinions: our own unaided, walking-proud path.<sup>53</sup> The other path is the path to Nibbāna. The two paths do nowhere meet. In fact, they go in opposite directions: one to continued birth, ageing and death (even in hell), the other to the end of birth, ageing and death. If we put the concepts into practice, we will know and see for ourselves.

Thus, if we have sufficient *pāramī* as to thirst for enlightenment, we will read a sutta and see how The Buddha explains that the elements and bases need to be known and seen for there to be enlightenment. Since He does not in any sutta explain what they are, we thirstily refer to the commentary, and drink. The commentary will sometimes explain in great detail (we drink copiously), sometimes it will explain only briefly, and refer to another commentary (we are refreshed by going from watering-place to watering-place). At the watering-places we find signs to even greater watering-places, where the water is rich in minerals and other nutriments, that is, the commentaries always make many references to the suttas and the Abhidhamma. And they always refer to two chief works on the entire practice:

- 1) *The Discrimination Path* (*Paṭisambhidā-Magga*): this is an insistently practical work, which expounds the way or path of 'discrimination' in its various aspects, and tries to show exactly how understanding takes place in a practical sense, not simply in theory. It is a detailed exposition of all the things that constitute the twofold (inseparable) practice of Samatha and Vipassanā.<sup>54</sup> In accordance with the Four Great References, it refers all the time to the suttas. Its author is the General of the Dhamma, the Venerable Sāri-

<sup>53</sup> For details on this path, please see below explanation by the Venerable Buddhaghosa, p.333.

<sup>54</sup> This explanation is taken (almost verbatim) from the introduction to the PTS translation to this work, *Path of Discrimination* (p.xii), by the editor A.K.Warder.

putta. To the faithful, thirsty for enlightenment, it is thrilling to study: to the faithless, it is boring and repetitive.

- 2) *The Purification Path (Visuddhi-Magga)*: this work expounds the threefold training of morality, concentration and wisdom: the wisdom section is the largest. It is also a practical work, but includes much doctrine (incl. semantics), in order that one may easily refer the explanations to the Vinaya, suttas and Abhidhamma: not surprisingly, for all the material in the *Visuddhi-Magga* has been taken from the ancient commentaries to the Vinaya, Suttas, and Abhidhamma, and there is continuous reference to those texts. There is no single author to this work, as it is a compilation of information from many sources.<sup>55</sup> To the faithful, thirsty for enlightenment, it awakens further faith, inspiration, and determination, difficult as it is to understand: to the faithless it is dismissed as fantastical, and impossibly complicated.<sup>56</sup>

As we study this way, it is possible for us properly to understand what The Buddha explains in the suttas: if we do not study in this way, there will be big grey areas in our understanding of the suttas. One cannot attain Nibbāna with the intention to practise Vipassanā on grey areas or on concepts.

As we in accordance with The Buddha's instructions practise under a teacher **of great learning, versed in the doctrine, master of the Dhamma, master of the Vinaya, master of the Matrices**, we can all the time refer his instructions to the explanations of the *Discrimination Path* and *Purification Path*, and the Commentary on the great sutta, the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna-Suttaṃ*', without which the Buddha's explanations there can be only vague, even to the point of completely wrong understanding.<sup>57</sup>

Then may we learn exactly how to develop the forty Samatha subjects that The Buddha discusses. Without reference to the Commentaries, it is impossible to know how to develop even one of those subjects up to jhāna. If, owing to practice in past lives, our faculties are sufficiently developed, and owing to practice in this life, we are able to develop them sufficiently further, we may in this way progress through the practice explained in the '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhā-*

<sup>55</sup> The *Visuddhi-Magga* is explained further in Appendix, p.333 ff.

<sup>56</sup> For The Buddha's simile in this regard, please see above, footnote 36, p.74.

<sup>57</sup> A good example of how these sutta instructions can be taken wrongly is two of The Buddha's instructions on mindfulness-of-breathing. He says the bhikkhu should train with the following thoughts: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body', followed by 'I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body', followed by 'I shall breathe in tranquillizing the body-formation', followed by 'I shall breathe out tranquillizing the body-formation'. Owing to insufficient learning, this instruction has led to the widespread phenomenon of meditators looking at the big, vague, concept that is their body (and the equally vague, conceptual goings-on in their body) in all sorts of 'skilful' ways, imagining that they by training this way may develop jhāna and practise Vipassanā. By reference to the commentary, however, this confusion could have been avoided, and reference been made to what would appear to be an oversight: 'Whenever, Ānanda, a bhikkhu... trains thus: "I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body... tranquillizing the bodily formation... on that occasion the bhikkhu dwells contemplating the body in the body... For what reason? A certain kind of body I, Ānanda, this declare, namely: the in&out breath."' (S.V.X.i.10 '*Kimila-Suttaṃ*' ('Kimila Sutta')) Thus, when The Buddha says the meditator should experience the whole body, He means the meditator should experience the whole body of breath; he needs to tranquillize the body-formation that is the breath, for jhāna to arise. (Please see also the explanation by the Venerable arahant Kāmaṅgala, referred to above, footnote 18, p.94.)

*na-Suttaṃ*'. How do we progress? We know and see the many elements, we know and see the five aggregates of past, future and present, internal and external, gross and subtle, inferior and superior, near and far, and if the conditions are right, we may even know and see the Unformed element: Nibbāna. That is the procedure we can find explained by The Buddha in the suttas.

If our procedure is otherwise, all we shall ever know is vague concepts, and our practice can therefore be nothing other than more or less energetic dithering.<sup>58</sup>

#### THE REFERENCES IN PRACTICE

Can there be any doubt about this? Yes, indeed, there is a vast, ancient and ever thriving cult of doubt about this: as so-called 'Buddhism' spreads throughout the world, so does the cult of doubt gain ever new followers and new views: paradoxical it may seem, but is in fact quite understandable.<sup>59</sup> Are the leaders enlightened ones, do you think? Let us look at only some of the objections.

One objection is that there are suttas which explain people getting enlightened without learning all these things, which means it is not necessary. What do we do with such a statement? We follow The Buddha's advice and impartially refer such a statement to the Suttas and Vinaya: that is His advised procedure with regard to the Four Great References.<sup>60</sup>

The statement that one needs not know and see the elements and bases in theory or practice: can it be reconciled with the Word of The Buddha, in the suttas and Vinaya? We have just discussed the matter at length, and know therefore that the statement cannot be reconciled with any of the extant Pali Texts. What are we to do with such a statement then? In the '*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*', The Buddha says we should conclude:

**'Clearly, this is not the Exalted One's Word, but has been wrongly understood by that bhikkhu.'**

And if we can, we refer the person who makes such claims to one of the rudimentary rules of thought: the distinction between the general and the particular. And we advise the person to study the suttas about kamma and kamma-vipāka. Then may that person learn that present wisdom is not the result only of present effort and acquisition of knowledge, but requires also past practice and acquisition of knowledge: the commentaries refer to the accumulation of kamma aimed at enlightenment as the *pāramī*.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> DITHER: hesitate about what to do; be unable to decide: *Stop dithering about which film you want to see or you'll miss them both!* (OALD)

<sup>59</sup> When we do not understand the five aggregates properly, we do not understand the First Noble Truth properly. When we think we need not understand the five aggregates properly, we think we need not understand the First Noble Truth properly. (Please see above definition of the First Noble Truth, p.22.) The result is explained by The Buddha in the above quotation regarding Brahmins and ascetics who do not properly understand the Four Noble Truths, p.102.

<sup>60</sup> Please see above quotation, p.281.

<sup>61</sup> An example of this (pointed out to the author by a lay-disciple of The Buddha) is the dog-duty ascetic, and ox-duty ascetic. When The Buddha explained the realities of their practice, they promptly gave up their practices. One became a lay-disciple, and the other ordained as a bhikkhu... to become an arahant. The change had as condition immediate, unqualified confidence in The Buddha. Were one to explain such a case in accordance with The Buddha's Teachings, one

Another objection may be the claim that many suttas are later contrived corruptions added into the Texts, indeed, that the Abhidhamma, the *Visuddhi-Magga* and other commentaries are an edifice of metaphysics added by contriving corrupt bhikkhus of Brahmanic origin, who simply wanted to make enlightenment more difficult than it really is. With this view as condition, the term ‘Abhidhamma’ becomes a term of derision, and any reference to the authoritative commentaries is met with scoff.<sup>62</sup> The claim may then be that referring to elements and bases, etc. is later contriving corruption of the Dhamma, that it is all unnecessarily technical and complicated, since it is in fact not difficult at all to become enlightened.<sup>63</sup> The great reference is in this case most often a single, supposedly more or less enlightened teacher, supported by philological (etc.) studies by sapient professors of this, that and the other university in the so-called developed world. Their learned articles purport to prove beyond dispute that very much of the Pali Texts is merely later interpolations of legend, speculation, fantasy, etc., that only a core of the Texts is in fact the pure, original Dhamma, which has none of all the fantastical nonsense about rebirth, other realms of existence, world systems and their expansions and contractions, etc.: only pure, ~~unaffected~~, rational, empirical science.<sup>64</sup>

This statement amounts to nothing less than that the learned Sangha elders of the past many centuries, who undertook and in many cases completed the three-fold higher training, were just a pack of fools, as must be also such learned Sangha elders of the present.

One of the dogmas that has developed from this view is that the ‘Original’ Dhamma is to be found only in a selection of suttas, with the qualification that only in that selection of suttas can we find what The Buddha taught, and only what The Buddha taught is the so-called ‘Original’ Dhamma.<sup>65</sup>

would have to say that past kamma was responsible: their *pāramīs*. (M.II.i.7 ‘*Kukkura-Vatika-Suttam*’ (‘Dog-Duty Ascetic Sutta’)) The Texts have very many such examples, and any bhikkhu will have his own store of stories about so-called ‘inexplicable’ cases of people for no apparent reason (so it appears to the faithless) gaining faith in The Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, even in the ~~modern~~ day. Please see also above footnote 25, p.287, and below footnote 88, p.306.

<sup>62</sup> SCOFF: 1. v.i. & t. speak derisively especially of religion or object of respect; jeer or mock *at*. 2. n. Mocking words, taunt.... (POD)

<sup>63</sup> The Buddha enumerates this as one of the future dangers by which the Dhamma-Vinaya are corrupted, and the True Dhamma comes to an end: bhikkhus who are ‘undeveloped in morality (*a-bhāvita-sīlā*)’ (they do not know and do not practise the Vinaya properly), ‘undeveloped in mind (*a-bhāvita-cittā*)’ (they have not developed the *jhānas*), and ‘undeveloped in wisdom (*a-bhāvita-paññā*)’ (they do not practise proper *Vipassanā*), do not understand the Abhidhamma, and discuss the Abhidhamma finding fault with the Abhidhamma, scoffing at the Abhidhamma. That way, although they are undeveloped in the threefold training, to the gullible they appear developed, and may thus be assured robes, food, dwelling, medicine, and honour. (A.V.ii.9 ‘*Tatiya Anāgata-Bhaya-Suttam*’ (‘Third Future Danger Sutta’) and commentary)

<sup>64</sup> Such a view is by The Buddha explained as the fundamental wrong view, since it denies the law of kamma and its result. Please see above, p.248.

<sup>65</sup> If one studies the criteria for selection, one will find that apart from those just mentioned, it is more often a question of not possessing sufficient faith and knowledge to reconcile the reconcilable according to the Four Great References. The Buddha’s advised course of action is not for one to dismiss the text as ‘corrupted’, ‘contrived’, etc., but: ‘A well-taught, bhikkhus, noble disciple... does not attend to those things unfit for attention, and he attends to those things fit for attention. What are the things unfit for attention that he does not attend to? They are things such

What do we do with such a statement?<sup>66</sup> First of all, we remind ourselves how the suttas came into existence at the First Council: they were compiled and redacted by the Sangha, not The Buddha. Having reminded ourselves of this simple fact, the mystical authority that we may ascribe to the suttas dissolves, and we can now soberly again follow The Buddha's advice by impartially referring the said statement to the suttas and Vinaya: that is His advised procedure with regard to the Four Great References. Can the said statement be reconciled with the Word of The Buddha, in the suttas and Vinaya? It cannot be reconciled with any of the extant Pali Texts.

Nowhere does The Buddha monopolize knowledge of the Dhamma, on the contrary.<sup>67</sup> Secondly, Dhamma is not Dhamma because it comes from The Buddha's mouth: Dhamma is Dhamma because it is Dhamma. Whose mouth it comes from is neither here nor there, for to believe there is actually someone uttering it is wrong view of self.<sup>68</sup> That is what the Four Great References are all about.

A merely perfunctory glance at the suttas will show that The Buddha frequently praised others for their wisdom, including non-arahants,<sup>69</sup> and even more fre-

that when he attends to them, the unarisen taint of... ignorance arises in him, and the arisen taint of ignorance increases [doubt is a manifestation of ignorance; being certain that Dhamma is non-Dhamma is even greater ignorance: for an extended analysis of how thus to feed one's ignorance, please see above, p. 105]. (M.I.2 '*Sabb-Āsava-Suttaṃ*' ('All the Taints Sutta')). The Buddha advises also: 'Others will adhere to their own views, hold on to them tenaciously, and relinquish them with difficulty; we shall not adhere to our own views or hold on to them tenaciously, but shall relinquish them easily': effacement should be practised thus.' (M.I.8 '*Sallekha-Suttaṃ*' ('Effacement Sutta')) In short, the faithful should reflect, 'My faith, concentration and wisdom is yet insufficient', and seek a watering place.

<sup>66</sup> The Buddha made it an offence against the Vinaya for a bhikkhu to disparage the Vinaya or the Dhamma to another bhikkhu or to a layperson: if, for example, he says certain Pali Texts should not be studied. (Vin.Pāc.viii.2) To disparage The Buddha, Dhamma, or Sangha in this way can even become the ground for the Sangha to carry out a formal act of censure (*tajjaniya kamma*) (Cv.I.4), or a formal act of banishment (*pabbājaniya kamma*) (Cv.I.14) And The Buddha allows householders to express displeasure at a bhikkhu who does so. (A.VIII.ix.8 '*Appasāda Pavedanīya Sutta*' ('Displeasure Expression Sutta')) And He explains that in this way to be critical of and find fault with the Dhamma is one of five things by which a bhikkhu can impossibly enter upon the right way ('*Tatiya-Sammatta-Niyāma-Suttaṃ*' ('Third Right-Way Sutta')), and He explains also that it is one of seven things which lead to a lay-disciple's decline (A.VII.iii.9 '*Dutiya Parihāni Sutta*' ('Second Decline Sutta')).

<sup>67</sup> This is explained also above, in connection with the First Great Reference. Please see also above quotations, p.17, and p.261.

<sup>68</sup> The Buddha discusses the matter with the Venerable Anurādha: 'What do you think, Anurādha, do you regard the Tathāgata as in matter? (No, Venerable Sir.) ... apart from matter ... sensation... perception... formations... consciousness? (No, Venerable Sir.) ... do you regard matter, sensation, perception, formations, and consciousness [together] as the Tathāgata?... do you regard the Tathāgata as one without matter, without sensation, without perception, without formations, without consciousness? (No, Venerable Sir.)' (S.III. I. II.iv.6 '*Anurādha-Suttaṃ*') Please see also the whole of above Appendix II, 'Knocking at the Right Door', about wrong view and Right View, more specifically, please see The Buddha's explanation of not knowing and not seeing as the cause for such a wrong view, p.258, and His explanation of the impossibility for a Noble One to entertain thoughts of self, p.263.

<sup>69</sup> For example, of one Pessa, son of an elephant-driver, The Buddha says he 'is wise' (*pañḍito*), 'has great wisdom' (*mahā-pañño*). M.II.i.1 '*Kandaraka-Suttaṃ*' (Kandaraka is The Buddha's interlocutor.)

quently, He praised single utterances by others, including utterances by non-arahañts. One example is the king Pasenadi of Kosala, about whom there is no mention that he should have attained any Path or Fruition. A number of suttas describe the king telling The Buddha about some thoughts he has had, and The Buddha's reply is:<sup>70</sup>

**So it is, your Majesty! So it is, your Majesty!**

*(Evam-etam, Mahā-Rāja, evam-etam, Mahā-Rāja!)*

Then The Buddha repeats what the king said, and adds a summarizing verse.<sup>71</sup> On the night of his death, the king called upon The Buddha, and worshipped The Buddha with great love and honour. When The Buddha asked him why he in such a way honoured The Buddha's body, the king gave ten detailed explanations. Later, The Buddha said to the bhikkhus:<sup>72</sup>

**Bhikkhus, before rising from his seat and departing, this King Pasenadi uttered Dhamma-monuments.**

**Learn, bhikkhus, the Dhamma-monuments! Master, bhikkhus, the Dhamma-monuments! Remember, bhikkhus, the Dhamma-monuments!**

**The Dhamma-monuments are beneficial, bhikkhus, and they belong to the fundamentals of the holy life.**

The Buddha told the bhikkhus to learn, master and remember Dhamma taught by a perfectly unenlightened man like King Pasenadi. How is that possible? It is perfectly possible, because the authenticity of the Dhamma does as mentioned earlier not depend on who utters it:

- ☉ the Dhamma is Dhamma whether it is uttered or not uttered;
- ☉ the Dhamma is Dhamma before a Buddha hears it and approves of it;
- ☉ the Dhamma is Dhamma while a Buddha hears it and approves of it;
- ☉ the Dhamma is Dhamma after a Buddha has heard it and approved of it;
- ☉ the Dhamma is Dhamma even if a Buddha has neither heard it nor approved of it.

We can take as one example, the case of the bhikkhu Bhūmija.<sup>73</sup> He was asked by a prince Jayasena whether it was true that one could attain no fruit from practice whether one aspired to it or not. The Venerable Bhūmija explained that if one practised badly, one would attain no fruits from the practice regardless of any aspirations one may or may not have made; if, on the other hand, one practised well, one would attain fruits from the practice, again regardless of any aspirations one may or may not have made. Both before and after giving this explanation, the Venerable Bhūmija explained further:

**That I have not, Prince, from the Exalted One's lips heard** (*Bhagavato sammukhā sutam*), **[from His] lips received** (*sammukhā paṭiggahitam*). **But it is possible that the Exalted One would answer as I have stated.**

When the Venerable Bhūmija later reported his teaching to The Buddha, the Buddha said:

<sup>70</sup> Please see S.I.III 'Kosala Saṃyutta' ('Kosala Section')

<sup>71</sup> This example was pointed out to the author by a lay-disciple of The Buddha.

<sup>72</sup> M.II.iv.9 'Dhamma-Cetiya-Suttaṃ' ('Dhamma Monuments Sutta')

<sup>73</sup> M.III.iii.6 'Bhūmija-Suttaṃ'



**Surely, Bhūmija, when you were asked such a question and answered thus, you said what has been said by Me** (*vutta-vādī ceva me hosi*), **and did not misrepresent Me** (*na ca maṃ abhūtena*), **with what is contrary to the Dhamma** (*abbhā-cikkhasi Dhammassa*).

**And you explained in conformity with the Dhamma** (*c-ānu-Dhammaṃ byākārosi*) **in such a way that nothing which provides a ground for censure can be legitimately deduced from your assertion.**

Is The Buddha's reference to history? Whether or not He said it? No. Historical facts are immaterial to the Dhamma, which is why The Buddha's reference is unrelated to history, and related only to the Dhamma, to what is in conformity with the Dhamma: nothing else.<sup>74</sup>

Hence, the Texts have many examples of the Buddha approving of and praising statements made by devas, by bhikkhus, by bhikkhunīs, and by lay-people: and arahants in the same way praising statements made by lay-people, and lay-people praising statements made by The Buddha and other arahants.

Furthermore, the claim that only the suttas constitute the teaching can also not found in the Teachings of The Buddha. In the suttas themselves, He says otherwise. For example, when explaining that the bhikkhu who 'goes alone' is incapable of **growth** (*vuddhiṃ*) in the Dhamma, The Buddha says:<sup>75</sup>

**And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu not know the watering place?**

**Here, a bhikkhu does not go from time to time to those bhikkhus of great learning** (*bahu-ssutā*), **versed in the doctrine** (*āgat-āgamā*), **masters of the Dhamma** (*Dhamma-dharā*), **masters of the Vinaya** (*Vinaya-dharā*), **masters of the Matrices** (*Mātikā-dharā*).

**And he does not enquire and ask questions of them thus: 'How is this, Venerable Sir? What is the meaning of this?'**

The Abhidhamma will obviously not be mentioned often in the suttas or Vinaya, because the Abhidhamma is not sutta- or Vinaya material.<sup>76</sup>

What then are we to do with the claim that only the Dhamma coming from The Buddha's mouth is the Dhamma, and only a selection of suttas (compiled and redacted after His Parinibbāna) constitutes the teaching of the Perfectly Enlightened Buddha over forty-five years? In the '*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*', The Buddha says we should conclude:

**'Clearly, this is not the Exalted One's Word, but has been wrongly understood by that bhikkhu.'**

Another objection then is that since the Suttas and Vinaya as we have them are more or less corrupt, one can no longer refer to them with certainty. That means the Four References have been undone, and the Texts are no longer 'articles of faith',<sup>77</sup> so to speak. Very serious, for we have no other access to The Buddha's Teaching of the Dhamma.

What to do? Very well, let us imagine that we remove the Abhidhamma, and

<sup>74</sup> Another such example is D.iii.5 '*Sam-Pasādanīya-Suttaṃ*' ('Serene Faith Sutta'), and S.IV.-viii.10 '*Mañicūlaka-Suttaṃ*' (Mañicūlaka is the name of The Buddha's interlocutor). Many other such examples, albeit with another sequence of events, may be found in the *Sutta-Piṭaka*.

<sup>75</sup> These are two qualities out of eleven, according to which the Buddha says the bhikkhu 'is incapable of growth, increase and fulfilment in this Dhamma-Vinaya'. Please see all eleven quoted above, footnote 29, p.28.

<sup>76</sup> For examples of the Abhidhamma mentioned in a sutta and in the Vinaya, please see also below endnote, p.330.

<sup>77</sup> ARTICLE OF FAITH: basic point of somebody's religious belief (OALD)

have only a *Dvi-Piṭaka*. And then all the commentaries will have to go too, for they all refer to the Abhidhamma. And then all the suttas which refer to elements and other ultimate things will also have to go, because we will have no means to understand them other than as concepts: that would necessarily include all suttas that explain dependent origination and cessation.<sup>78</sup> What is left? Literature and poetry. What are we to do with literature and poetry?

All we can do is sit around and learn, discuss, practice and teach rule&rite (even rule&rite with wrong view)<sup>79</sup> and kindergarten Dhamma (even kindergarten non-Dhamma), to become heirs in rule&rite, kindergarten Dhamma (even kindergarten non-Dhamma), and merely material things: sweeping and chopping wood, celebrating such chores; making, dyeing, washing and celebrating robes; firing bowls, going for alms, eating almsfood, washing the almsbowl, and celebrating the bowl and the food; raising funds for monastic dwellings, pagodas, statues, etc., designing them, making them, maintaining them, and celebrating monastic dwellings, pagodas, statues, etc.; going through the motions of monastic procedures as an end in themselves, and celebrating monastic procedures as an end in themselves: in short, to ordain as bhikkhus in order merely to wear the robes, and to enjoy being bhikkhus in the company of bhikkhus. Quaint as all that may be, we do not become heirs in the Dhamma that way, for it does not lead to the end of birth, ageing and death.<sup>80</sup> Rather, it leads to the end of the True Dhamma (*Sa-Dhamma*); it leads to the end of The *Buddha-Sāsana*.<sup>81</sup>

It is better for us to remember that before we can so much as begin perhaps to think to consider the possibility of calling ourselves what is called 'Buddhists', we take three refuges. And insofar as one's ordination as a bhikkhu accorded with The Buddha's guidelines in the *Vinaya*, one cannot have take ordination as a bhikkhu without having taken these three refuges:

- ☉ 'To The Buddha for refuge I go.' (*Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*)
- ☉ 'To the Dhamma for refuge I go.' (*Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*)
- ☉ 'To the Sangha for refuge I go' (*Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*)

That is not one refuge, or two refuges: it is three refuges. If we take any other

<sup>78</sup> For the innumerable nuances, elucidations and illustrations that then would have to go, please see above, p.26f.

<sup>79</sup> Rule&rite with wrong view would include 'Buddhist' amulets, reciting the Dhamma in order to gain success in business, sprinkling with 'holy water', etc. All such rites are forbidden by The Buddha, because they corrupt the faith. Please see also above discussion of rule&rite, p.54.

<sup>80</sup> The Buddha explains: 'Be my heirs in the Dhamma, bhikkhus, not my heirs in material things.' (M.I.i.3 '*Dhamma-Dāyāda-Suttaṃ*' ('Dhamma-Heir Sutta'))

<sup>81</sup> When The Buddha is on His deathbed, devas pay homage to Him with heavenly flowers, sandal-wood powder, music and song. The commentary explains that this kind of homage is material worship (*āmiṣa-pūjā*), which cannot sustain the Dispensation (*Sāsana*) for a single day, not even for as long as it takes to drink one helping of rice-gruel. It explains that building even a thousand monasteries or a thousand pagodas cannot sustain the Dispensation. Thus, in the sutta, The Buddha explains that the highest homage to be paid to Him is a bhikkhu's, bhikkhunī's, male/female devotee's proper practise of the Dhamma (see the practice quoted p.112). The commentary calls this Right Practice (*Sammā-Patipatti*), which is immaterial homage (*nir-āmiṣa-pūjā*), and explains that only that can sustain the Dispensation. (D.ii.3 '*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta'))

refuge, we can no longer call ourselves Buddhists, can we? Even if we are wearing the robes of a bhikkhu, but do not have these three refuges as our refuge, we cannot properly call ourselves a bhikkhu, can we?

The third refuge is the Sangha, and that means the human beings who in the past ordained, chiefly the Sangha of Noble Ones and arahants: skilled men and women who saw and knew the Four Noble Truths, first and foremost those who associated with The Buddha: it was they who compiled the Pali Texts. Over the subsequent two thousand six hundred years their followers learned and learn those Texts, practised and practise the procedures laid down in those Texts with deference and gratitude, and many attained Paths and Fruitions. If not, they accumulated many superior *pāramī*. Why? Owing to faith in The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.

Please take the statement that has here just been made and refer it to the Vinaya and suttas. Then may you know whether it reflects The Buddha's Teachings. What then are the alternative three refuges?

- 'To the man who called himself Buddha for refuge I go'  
That is worship of The Buddha as a person: personality cult, by which the practice becomes only rule&rite: if the Vinaya is observed, it is observed half-heartedly, for it is seen only as an end in itself. This is the condition for learning the Vinaya to refute scrupulous practice of the Vinaya.<sup>82</sup> It is also a condition for claims that the Dhamma is only the Dhamma if it comes from The Buddha's personal mouth: 'Original Buddhism!' is one of the fanclub's slogans.
- 'To the Dhamma as a literature, a philosophy and a poetry for refuge I go': that is Dhamma as vague and pretty concepts, to be chatted about over a cup of afternoon tea or coffee.<sup>83</sup> The result is that we no longer know the difference between what is Dhamma and what is not Dhamma: worldly things are discussed as if they were Dhamma, and prattle (*samhappalāpa*) becomes the order of the day, under the guise of 'Dhamma discussion'.
- 'To ~~modern~~ science and my own conceit for refuge I go': that is the ~~modern~~ Sangha, so to speak, when we raise our benighted, ill-educated or entirely uneducated head above the learned elders of the bhikkhu Sangha, of present and past.

If those are our refuges, all that is left is confusion and disorder, for we have taken refuge in doubt and unfaith: in ignorance of the Dhamma. How long, do you think, will the True Dhamma last with such confusion? We can see the con-

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<sup>82</sup> When one is selective about the *Ti-Piṭaka* (Three Baskets), selective about the suttas, it follows (as does night follow day) that one will be selective about which Vinaya rules need to be followed: such selection can by reference to the Four Great References not be reconciled with The Buddha's Teachings, nor ever can the alleged criteria for selection.

<sup>83</sup> It is also one of what The Buddha calls the future dangers: uninstructed/ill-instructed bhikkhus, who for that reason do not study the Pali Texts (deep (*gambhīrā*), profound (*gambhīr-athā*), transcendent (*lokuttarā*), connected with the Void (*suññatā-ppaṭi-samyuttā*). Instead, they apply themselves to digressive poetry, rhetoric, alien teachings that are based on wrong view (perhaps philosophical and historical analyses of Buddhist culture, maybe ~~modern~~ science, philosophy, psychology, yoga, other mystical sciences, etc.). (A.V.ii.9 'Tatiya Anāgata Bhaya-Suttaṃ' ('Third Future Danger Sutta'))

fusion already: everywhere in the ‘Buddhist’ world. The so-called spread of ‘Buddhism’ to new climes has been little more than the spread of either kindergarten-Dhamma, confusion-Dhamma or both.

Such confusion is the condition for one thing only: an enormous insurmountable hindrance on the path to the end of rebirth, ageing and death — the hindrance of doubt, which is a nutriment of ignorance.<sup>84</sup> ‘Farewell, Buddha’; ‘Farewell, Dhamma’, ‘Farewell, Sangha’, and worst of all, ‘Farewell, Nibbāna’: ‘Hello again, birth, ageing and death’.

It is up to us where we want to go for refuge, but the result will be accordingly. Thus, we are well advised to remember that when The Buddha explains the thirty-eight supreme blessings that we as human beings may achieve, the very first supreme blessing He gives concerns whom we associate with, meaning whom we have gone to for refuge.<sup>85</sup>

**Not to associate with the foolish** (*a-sevanā ca bālānaṃ*), **but with the wise to associate** (*paññitānañ-ca sevanā*), **and to honour those worthy of honour** (*pūjā ca pūja-niyānaṃ*): **this is a blessing supreme** (*etaṃ maṅgala-muttamaṃ*).

If we want fear, trouble and calamities supreme, the best thing we can do is to cultivate doubt, unfaith, ignorance and conceit: that is achieved by associating with the foolish. The calamities supreme will come for sure: continued rebirth, ageing and death, even in hell.<sup>86</sup>

If, however, we want the blessings supreme, the best thing we can do is to cultivate confidence, faith, wisdom, and humility: that is achieved by associating with the wise<sup>87</sup> (the wisest being The Buddha, whom as a Teacher we can now

<sup>84</sup> For doubt as a nutriment of ignorance, please see above, p. 105.

<sup>85</sup> Sn.ii.4 ‘Maṅgala-Suttaṃ’ (‘Blessing Sutta’) (also Kh.v.5)

<sup>86</sup> The commentary refers to The Buddha’s analysis of the fool: ‘Three, bhikkhus, are the characteristics of the fool, signs of the fool, attributes of the fool. What three? Here a fool is one who thinks wrong thoughts, speaks wrong words, does wrong deeds. If a fool were not so, how would the wise know him thus: “This person is a fool, an untrue man.”’ (*asappuriso*)? (M.III.iii.9 ‘Bāla-Paññita-Suttaṃ’ (‘Fool-Wise-Man Sutta’)). The commentary explains further: ‘With their misapprehension, they ruin both themselves and those who give effect to their words.’ Hence, the commentary quotes The Buddha’s introduction to the ‘*Bahu-Dhātuka-Suttaṃ*’ (please see above, footnote 20, p.285). It explains also: ‘Moreover, a fool resembles putrid fish, and one who associates with him resembles a leaf-bag in which putrid fish has been wrapped, and so becomes fit only for wise men’s rejection and disgust.’ It quotes The Buddha’s simile of the putrid fish: ‘Now when a man ties up with blades /Of *kusa* grass some putrid fish, /The blades of grass get putrid too:/ Such is consorting with a fool.’ (Iti.III.iii.7 ‘*Sukha-Patthanā-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Happiness Aspiration Sutta’)) The commentary quotes also one Akittipaṇḍita’s description of the fool: ‘He leads half-wittedly to loss, /And counsels irresponsibly, /Prefers misjudgement, and, if told /What is correct, shows discomfort. /Nothing he knows of discipline (*vinayaṃ*): /“Tis good to have no sight of him.”’

<sup>87</sup> The commentary refers to The Buddha’s analysis of the wise man: ‘Three, bhikkhus, are the characteristics of the wise man, signs of the wise man, attributes of the wise man. What three? Here a wise man is one who thinks right thoughts, speaks right words, does right deeds. If a wise man were not so, how would the wise know him thus: “This person is a wise man, a true man.”’ (*sappuriso*)? (M.III.iii.9 ‘Bāla-Paññita-Suttaṃ’ (‘Fool-Wise-Man Sutta’)). The commentary explains wise men further: ‘They are as capable of eliminating all fear, risk and calamity for those who give effect to their words as are protection in a rebellion, a lamp in darkness, food and drink and so on in a state of being overcome by pain of hunger and thirst and so on. For innumerable indeed and not to be measured are the devas and men who, after coming to the Perfect One, have

find only in the Dhamma, which we can find only in the *Ti-Piṭaka*). The four most supreme blessings of the thirty-eight supreme blessings enumerated by The Buddha are:

**Touched by worldly things** (*putṭhassa lokadhammehi*), [35] **the mind of his does not stir** (*cittam yassa na kampati*), [36] **without sorrow** (*a-sokaṃ*), [37] **stainless** (*vi-rajam*), [38] **secure** (*khemaṃ*), **this is a blessing supreme** (*etaṃ maṅgala-muttamaṃ*).

If we have faith in the wise, we can achieve everything, and achieve these supreme blessings supreme. Indeed, we can achieve them even if our faith in the wise is completely blind.<sup>88</sup> If, on the other hand, we have blind unfaith in the wise, we can achieve nothing at all, for we have gained not even the first blessing supreme.

#### THE FAITHFUL PERSON

The *Discrimination Path* explains the faithful person (*saddho puggalo*) and the faithless person (*a-ssaddho puggalo*):<sup>89</sup>

- The faithful person has little dust in his eyes; the faithless person has much dust in his eyes....
- The faithful person has keen faculties; the faithless person has dull faculties....
- The faithful person is one of good parts;<sup>90</sup> the faithless person is one of bad parts....
- The faithful person is easy to instruct; the faithless person is hard to instruct....
- The faithful person sees fear in the other world, and in what is censurable;
- the faithless person sees no fear in the other world, and in what is censurable....

If we take this passage and try to reconcile it with the suttas and Vinaya, we find that it is perfectly reconcilable: not surprising, for the *Discrimination Path* is and has been held in high regard by all the learned, conscientious, sincerely practising Sangha elders of past and present (an endangered species, alas).

We may therefore, by reference to this passage, understand that when our faith

attained exhaustion of taints or become established in the Brahma-world, or become established in the world of devas, or been reborn in the world of the happy destinations.’ Hence, the commentary quotes The Buddha’s introduction to the *‘Bahū-Dhātuka-Suttaṃ*’ (please see above, footnote 20, p.285). It explains also: ‘Moreover, a wise man resembles such scented goods as *tagara* flowers, and one who associates with him resembles a leaf in which *tagara* flowers have been wrapped, and he becomes fit for wise men’s cultivation and approval. It quotes The Buddha’s simile of the *tagara*: Now when in leaves a man /Ties up some *tagara*, /The leaves will of the scent partake: /Such is consorting with the wise.’ (Iti.III.iii.7 *‘Sukha-Patthanā-Suttaṃ*’ (‘Happiness Aspiration Sutta’)) The commentary quotes also one Akkittipaṇḍita’s description of the wise: ‘They lead wise-wittedly to gain, /Counsel not irresponsibly, /Prefer good judgement, and, if told /What is correct, show docility. /And discipline (*vinaya*) they understand: “’Tis good to have to do with them.”’

<sup>88</sup> An example is the illiterate villager who undertakes a meditation retreat, and in blind faith follows the learned teacher’s instructions. Such a villager can and does in the ~~next~~ day attain the jhānas, and penetrate to ultimate reality to practise Vipassanā on the eleven kinds of five aggregates: his/her success is forerun by faith, and is conditioned by superior *pāramīs*: they do not include historical and other idle, speculative views about the Dhamma. Please see also above footnote 25, p.287, and footnote 61, p.299.

<sup>89</sup> *Paṭisambhidā-Magga* (*Path of Discrimination*) LXVIII *‘Indriya-Paropariyatta-Ñāna-Niddeso*’ (‘Penetration of Others’ Faculties Knowledge’): *Pāli Text Society*; 1997.

<sup>90</sup> ONE OF GOOD/BAD PARTS: a translation of *svākāro/dvākāro*; PART ‘(in *pl.*) intellectual qualities, talents or conduct [CTCD]’

in The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha is practised (rather than being merely professed), it means we have little dust in our eyes, our faculties are keen, we are of good parts, we are easy to instruct, and we see fear in the world of formation, birth, ageing and death: it means we are the faithful person. That is to a very large extent the result of past practice.

The faithful person may attain to the most supreme blessings, and with those supreme blessings as condition, the faithful person will have put an end to birth, ageing and death.

HERE ONLY, SUBHADDA

A supreme example of this is found in the case of Subhadda the wanderer, the last newcomer to be taught by our Gotama Buddha. It is a perfect example of what we have here discussed. It serves as a guide to anyone who is in doubt about the teachings that they hear or read.<sup>91</sup>

Not long before The Buddha attained His Parinibbāna, as He was already lying upon His deathbed, Subhadda sought out The Buddha, because he wanted The Buddha to clarify his doubts.

He asked the Venerable Ānanda please to be allowed into the presence of The Buddha, and the Venerable Ānanda refused him permission, because the Buddha was tired. The Venerable Ānanda was worried that Subhadda would unduly tire The Buddha further. But The Buddha said to the Venerable Ānanda:

**Enough, Ānanda! Do not stop Subhadda; Subhadda is allowed to see the Tathāgata.**

**Whatever Subhadda asks Me, he asks it all for the sake of knowledge only, not for the sake of making trouble. And what I shall answer to his questions, he shall quickly understand it.**

Then the Venerable Ānanda gave Subhadda permission to see the Buddha. And Subhadda asked The Buddha about the famous ascetics and Brahmins that had existed at the time, who had many followers, were teachers of many people, and had been held in high regard by many.<sup>92</sup>

Subhadda asked The Buddha about those famous ascetics and Brahmins:<sup>93</sup>

**They all claimed they had attained direct realization: did they all attain direct realization, or did some of them attain direct realization, and some did not attain direct realization?**

Subhadda's question is nothing new, is it? But is Subhadda really interested in

<sup>91</sup> D.ii.3 *'Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ'* ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta')

<sup>92</sup> FAMOUS ASCETICS AND BRAHMINS: the ones he mentions are also mentioned in, for example, Sn.iii.6 *'Sabhiya-Suttaṃ'*. There the wanderer Sabhiya is given a series of questions by a deva who formerly was related to him, to ask to all the famous teachers of the time, he being advised to ordain under the one who can answer them. He asks all the teachers also named here by Subhadda, but is reluctant to ask the ascetic Gotama because He is 'young only of birth (*daharo c-eva jātiya*), and newly gone forth (*navo ca pabbajjāya*),' whereas the others are 'old (*jinnā*)... advanced in years (*addha-gatā*) ... long gone forth (*cira-pabbajitā*)'. One may therefore understand that they will all have passed on by the time of The Buddha's Parinibbāna some forty-five years later.

<sup>93</sup> In M.I.iii.10 *'Cūḷa-Sār-Opama-Suttaṃ'* ('Small Heartwood-Simile Sutta'), The Buddha has a similar conversation with a Brahmin called Piṅgalakoccha, where the Dhamma that The Buddha teaches him is how various types of ascetic fail to gain the heartwood of the Dhamma because of complacency, whereas the one who never rests content gains the heartwood of the Dhamma. The Brahmin is delighted at the teaching, and declares himself a devotee of The Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha.

the individual teacher's attainments? No. According to the letter, his question is about their attainments, but according to the meaning, his question is about their teachings. He wants to know which teaching is right for the realization of arahantship, and which teaching is not.

The purport of Subhadda's question is: 'They all claimed that their method led to direct realization, to arahantship. Do all the methods they taught lead to arahantship, or do only some of them, and others not?'

That is the purport of Subhadda's question. And that is how The Buddha responds to it.

The Buddha's answer is not very long and complicated, but it is full of meaning. It is a very important guide to us in our search for the true Dhamma, a very important guide to us when we come into contact with the variety of teachings that exist and that have at all times existed. Let us therefore take The Buddha's answer bit by bit.

First The Buddha puts aside the irrelevant and brings forth the relevant:

**Enough, Subhadda, leave that be: 'They all claimed they had attained direct realization: did they all attain direct realization, or did some of them attain direct realization and some did not attain direct realization.'**

**The Dhamma to you, Subhadda, I shall teach. Listen to it, pay good attention, and I shall speak.** (Just so, Venerable Sir.)

Whether such and such a teacher was or was not an arahant as he claimed, is the irrelevant. The relevant is the Dhamma.

And The Buddha explained the Dhamma:

**In whatever Dhamma-Vinaya, Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is not found (*na upalabbhati*),**

[1] **the [first] ascetic is there also not found (*samaṇopi tattha na upalabbhati*).**

[2] **The second ascetic is there also not found (*dutiyopi tattha samaṇo na upalabbhati*).**

[3] **The third ascetic is there also not found (*tatīyopi tattha samaṇo na upalabbhati*).**

[4] **The fourth ascetic is there also not found (*catutthopi tattha samaṇo na upalabbhati*).**

**But in whatever Dhamma-Vinaya, Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is found (*upalabbhati*),**

[1] **the [first] ascetic is there also found (*samaṇopi tattha upalabbhati*).**

[2] **The second ascetic is there also found (*dutiyopi tattha samaṇo upalabbhati*).**

[3] **The third ascetic is there also found (*tatīyopi tattha samaṇo upalabbhati*).**

[4] **The fourth ascetic is there also found (*catutthopi tattha samaṇo upalabbhati*).**

The first ascetic is the stream-enterer, the second ascetic is the once-returner, the third ascetic is the non-returner, and the fourth ascetic is the arahant: they are the four types of noble disciple.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Having explained that other teachings are devoid of the four ascetics, in A.IV.V.iv.10 'Sa-maṇa-Suttaṃ' ('Ascetic Sutta'), The Buddha then explains that the four ascetics are the four noble disciples: the stream enterer (*sotāpanno*) with destroyed the three (lower realm) fetters (*samyojana*); the once-returner (*sakadāgāmi*) with also lust, hatred, and delusion thinned (*tanuttā*); the one (non-returner) with destroyed all five fetters of the lower realm (*oram-bhāgiya*) (the sensual realm), and the one (arahant) with destroyed taints (*āsava*). In S.V.I.viii.9 'Oram-Bhāgiya-Suttaṃ' ('Lower Realm Sutta'), The Buddha explains that the five fetters of the lower realm are: 1) identity view (*sakkāya-dīṭṭhi*)SE, 2) doubt (*vicikicchā*)SE, 3) engaging in rule&rite (*sīla-bbata-parāmāso*)SE, 4) sensual desire (*kāma-cchando*)OR-NR, 5) ill-will (*byāpādo*)OR-NR. In S.V.I.viii.10 'Uddham-Bhāgiya-Suttaṃ' ('Upper Realm Sutta'), The Buddha explains that the five fetters of the upper realm are: 1) [fine] material lust (*rūpa-rāgo*)A, 2) immaterial lust (*arūpa-rāgo*)A, 3) conceit (*māno*)A, 4) restlessness (*uddhaccam*)A,

According to The Buddha's words to Subhadda, one can become a noble disciple (one can become enlightened), only if one practises a teaching wherein is the Noble Eightfold Path. The training of the Noble Eightfold Path is a must.

What is the Noble Eightfold Path?

- 1) Right Speech (*Sammā Vācā*), Right Action (*Sammā Kammanta*), and Right Livelihood (*Sammā Ājīva*) make up the morality grouping (*sīla-kkhandha*).
- 2) Right Effort (*Sammā Vāyāma*), Right Mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*), and Right Concentration (*Sammā Samādhi*) make up the concentration grouping (*samādhi-kkhandha*).
- 3) Right View (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*) and Right Thought (*Sammā Saṅkappa*) make up the wisdom grouping (*paññā-kkhandha*).

Those three aggregates correspond to the threefold training:<sup>95</sup>

- 1) The higher-morality training (*adhi-sīla-sikkhā*)
- 2) The higher-concentration training (*adhi-samādhi-sikkhā*)
- 3) The higher-wisdom training (*adhi-paññā-sikkhā*)

What is the purpose of developing these three trainings? It is to understand the four Noble Truths.

According to The Buddha, enlightenment is possible only when there is understanding of the four Noble Truths.<sup>96</sup>

And He explains that such understanding comprises four tasks that need to be done:<sup>97</sup>

- 1) The Noble Truth of Suffering needs to be fully understood by direct knowledge.
- 2) The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering needs to be abandoned by direct knowledge.
- 3) The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering needs to be realized by direct knowledge.
- 4) The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering needs to be developed by direct knowledge.

In other words, says The Buddha, the Noble Eightfold Path needs to be developed by direct knowledge, which He says is the same as to say *samatha* and *vipassanā* need to be developed by direct knowledge, and that is the same as to say that the four foundations of mindfulness need to be developed by direct knowledge.

5) ignorance (*avijjā*). (SE-0R-NR-A indicate for whom the fetter is permanently thinned or destroyed.) In both suttas, The Buddha explains that for the destruction of the fetters, the Noble Eightfold Path needs to be developed.

<sup>95</sup> For the threefold higher training, see p.278.

<sup>96</sup> S.V.XII.iii.1 '*Paṭhama-Koṭigāma-Suttaṃ*' ('First Koṭigāma Sutta') and D.ii.3 '*Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great-Parinibbāna Sutta').

<sup>97</sup> S.V.XII.ii.1 '*Dhamma-Cakka-Ppavattana-Suttaṃ*' ('Dhamma-Wheel Setting-in-Motion Sutta'); M.III.v.7 '*Mahā-Saḷ-Āyatanika-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Sixfold-Base Sutta'); A.IV.V.vi.1 '*Abhiññā-Suttaṃ*' ('Direct-Knowledge Sutta'); A.X.II.v.5 '*Uttiya-Suttaṃ*' ('Uttiya Sutta'); D.II.9 '*Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna-Suttaṃ*' ('Great Mindfulness-Foundation Sutta')



Since this is so, it follows that in whatever teaching the four foundations of mindfulness are not found, there enlightenment is also not found. That is what The Buddha says in the suttas.

Thus, we see here that The Buddha's approach to Subhadda's question about which teaching leads to enlightenment was identical to the approach He advises His followers to take with regard to the fourth great reference discussed above:

**Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu says thus: 'In such&such a residence one elder bhikkhu lives, of great learning, versed in the doctrine, master of the Dhamma, master of the Vinaya, master of the Matrices. 'From that elder's mouth I heard it, from [that elder's] mouth I received it: "This is Dhamma, this is Vinaya, this is the Teacher's Teaching."**

**That utterance, bhikkhus, of the bhikkhu's should neither be praised nor scorned.**

**Neither praising it, nor scorning it, the phrase and letter should be studied well, reconciled with the suttas, seen in relation to the Vinaya.**

**If, when reconciled with the suttas and seen in relation to the Vinaya, it cannot be reconciled with suttas or seen in relation to the Vinaya, the conclusion must be: 'Clearly, this is not the Exalted One's Word, but has been wrongly understood by that bhikkhu.'**

**Thus that, bhikkhus, are you to reject.**

**But if, it can be reconciled with the suttas and seen in relation to the Vinaya, the conclusion must be: 'Clearly, this is the Exalted One's Word, and has been rightly understood by that bhikkhu.'**

The Buddha neither praised nor scorned the other teachers' claims to direct realization. He just referred the matter to the suttas and Vinaya. According to the suttas and Vinaya, enlightenment is possible only in a teaching where samatha and vipassanā are found, which is the same as to say, the four foundations of mindfulness. That is how The Buddha precluded any discussion, speculation, and personal ideas. 'This is what the suttas and Vinaya say — full stop.'

Then, according to the suttas and Vinaya, in which teaching are the four foundations of mindfulness to be found? The Noble Eightfold Path? The threefold training? The Buddha told Subhadda:

**In this very Dhamma-Vinaya, Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is found (*upalabbhati*).**

**Here only (*idh-eva*), Subhadda, is the [first] ascetic (*samaṇo*), here the second ascetic (*idha dutiyo samaṇo*), here the third ascetic (*tatiyo samaṇo*), here the fourth ascetic (*idha catuttho samaṇo*).**

The Buddha said: **here only, Subhadda (*idh-eva*).** The Buddha did not say: 'Here and there, Subhadda'. The Buddha did not say that enlightenment can be found in any other teaching: only in His teaching.<sup>98</sup>

Thus, according to the suttas, The Buddha says a teaching that in practice leads to enlightenment is exclusive to a Fully-Enlightened Buddha. The Buddha does not by that deny that other teachers and their disciples may be highly virtuous and very skilful in jhāna, nor does He deny that there are truths in other teachings, but only mundane truths.<sup>99</sup> The cessation of suffering and the path

<sup>98</sup> See also *Dhamma-Pada* quotation, p.92.

<sup>99</sup> The Buddha explains it to a naked ascetic Kassapa: 'There are, Kassapa, some ascetics and Brahmins, clever, subtle, experienced in disputation, hair splitters. They wander about, as it were, demolishing the metaphysics of others with their knowledge. And they with some of my points agree, with some points do not agree. What they sometimes say 'Good!' (*Sādhu!*) to, that I also sometimes say 'Good!' to. What they sometimes say 'Not good!' (*Na Sādhu!*) to, that I also sometimes say 'Not good!' to. What they sometimes say 'Good!' to, that I sometimes say 'Not good!' to. What they sometimes say 'Not good!' to, I sometimes say 'Good!' to.' (D.i.8 '*Mahā-*

leading to the cessation of suffering are supramundane, however, and they exist only in a Buddha's Teaching. To Subhadda The Buddha explains this in the plainest and most direct way:<sup>100</sup>

**Devoid are other teachings of ascetics** (*suññā para-ppavādā samaṇebhi aññehi*).

Devoid are other teachings of the four noble disciples, which is the same as to say that other teachings are devoid of the means necessary for supramundane knowledge; devoid of the means necessary for permanent eradication or thinning of any of the fetters.

Why so? Because, according to the suttas and Vinaya, dependent origination is taught only by a Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha. And unless one knows and sees the workings of dependent origination with one's own direct knowledge, one cannot overcome belief in a self of some kind or other: some kind of self that is annihilated after death or some kind of self that is eternal and therefore continues to exist after death. And unless one overcomes this delusion, one cannot become just the first ascetic, the stream enterer.<sup>101</sup> Being unable to become just the first ascetic, of course, one will never be able to achieve any kind of permanent eradication or thinning of any of the fetters, let alone put a complete end to suffering. Hence The Buddha explains that faith in a teaching where this is not understood is faith that is ill-placed:<sup>102</sup>

**In such a Dhamma-Vinaya, bhikkhus,**

- **the faith in the teacher it is to be reckoned as not rightly directed** (*na samma-ggato*);
- **the faith in the Dhamma it is to be reckoned as not rightly directed;**
- **the fulfilment of morality it is to be reckoned as not rightly directed;**
- **the esteem and pleasure in fellow practisers is to be reckoned as not rightly directed.**

**What is the reason?**

*-Sīha-Nāda-Suttaṃ* ('Great Lion's Roar Sutta'). See also, for example, quotations, p.35. The Buddha explains this in, for example, the case of the king Makhādeva, who ruled and conducted himself according to the Dhamma: see footnote 31, p.47. In also M.III.iii.9 '*Bāla-Paṇḍita-Suttaṃ*' ('Fool-Wise-Man Sutta'), The Buddha explains that the Wheel-Turning Monarch (who may appear independently of a Buddha's dispensation) advises his people: 'You should not kill living beings; ...take what has not been given... engage in venereal misconduct... speak falsehood... drink intoxicants....' Many examples are found in The Buddha's further accounts of His past lives, the so-called Jātakas.

<sup>100</sup> The Buddha says this also in '*Cūḷa Sīha-Nāda-Suttaṃ*', and the commentary explains that 'other teachings' refers to the sixty-two views given by The Buddha in D.i.1 '*Brahma-Jāla-Suttaṃ*' ('Supreme Net Sutta'). All are metaphysics based on misinterpretation of past existence recollected seen in present meditation, based on pure reasoning, based on misinterpretation of the object of present samatha meditation, based on fear of being wrong, on fear of defilements arising out of being either right or wrong, on stupidity, and based merely on theory. Nonetheless, explains The Buddha, all are caused by feeling and craving. And The Buddha explains that He and His disciples differ in this respect because they have direct knowledge of dependent origination and its cessation, with no admixture of metaphysics or theories. See further footnote 102, p.312.

<sup>101</sup> In S.II.I.ii.3 '*Samaṇa-Brāhmaṇa-Suttaṃ*' ('The Ascetic&Brahmin Sutta'), The Buddha explains that to attain the Noble Path, one needs to understand each factor of dependent origination, its origination, its cessation, and the path leading to its cessation. And in S.II.I.ii.5 '*Kaccānagotta-Suttaṃ*' ('Kaccānagotta Sutta'), He explains that Right View with regard to a self is attained (stream entry) only when one sees dependent origination with Right Wisdom.

<sup>102</sup> M.I.ii.1 '*Cūḷa Sīha-Nāda-Suttaṃ*' ('Small Lion's-Roar Sutta'). In the sutta, The Buddha explains that as opposed to other teachers, only a Tathāgata makes known self-belief clinging (*ata-vād-upādāna*), and its cause, which is why only His teaching leads to Nibbāna.

So it is, bhikkhus, with such an ill-taught Dhamma-Vinaya, badly proclaimed, not leading outwards, not leading to peace, not proclaimed by a Fully Enlightened Buddha.

Here, when The Buddha says **not leading outwards** and **not leading to peace**, He does not mean that other teachings do not lead to a higher realm of existence, or that they do not lead to a more peaceful way of life, etc. They may very well do so, but, as just mentioned, such things are merely mundane.<sup>103</sup> And so long as there is the belief in a self of some kind or other, one's understanding of reality cannot but be fundamentally flawed. A fundamentally flawed understanding of reality is what The Buddha calls wrong view (*micchā-dīṭṭhi*). And He explains that all teachings other than a Buddha's Teachings fit under one of sixty-two wrong views. Wrong view is the forerunner of the wrong eightfold path. It does not lead out of the round of rebirth; it does not lead to the peace of Nibbāna, the stilling of all formations. That is why The Buddha calls it the wrong practice (*micchā-paṭipatti*).<sup>104</sup>

The right practice, however, has as its forerunner Right View (*Sammā-Dīṭṭhi*). Right View is the forerunner of the Noble Eightfold Path, and only the Noble Eightfold Path leads to any permanent thinning or eradication of the fetters. And as The Buddha explained to Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is found only in The Buddha's Teaching.

Hence, The Buddha explains that faith in His teaching is faith that is well-placed:

In such a Dhamma-Vinaya, bhikkhus,

- ☉ the faith in the teacher it is to be reckoned as rightly directed (*samma-ggato*).
- ☉ The faith in the Dhamma is to be reckoned as rightly directed.
- ☉ The fulfilment of morality is to be reckoned as rightly directed.
- ☉ the esteem and pleasure in fellow practisers is to be reckoned as rightly directed.

What is the reason?

So it is, bhikkhus, with such a well-taught Dhamma-Vinaya, well proclaimed, leading outwards, leading to peace, proclaimed by a Fully Enlightened Buddha.

Before we raise any objections we need here to remember that The Buddha is a Buddha. A Buddha does not teach according to any view or any political agenda. He teaches just according to the Truth.<sup>105</sup>

Whatever, bhikkhus, in this world (with its devas, with its Māras, with its brahmas, with this generation of ascetics and brahmins, with its princes and people) is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought, reflected over with the mind, about it all the Tathāgata is fully self-enlightened (*sabbam Tathāgatenā abhi-sambuddham*). That is why He is called "the Tathāgata".

And whatever, bhikkhus, He says, speaks, and explains, in between the night the Tathāgata becomes fully self-enlightened with the unsurpassable Full Self-Enlightenment, and the night He passes into the Final Nibbāna of the Nibbāna element without clung-to remains, all that is just so (*sabbam tam tath-eva hoti*), not otherwise (*no aññathā*). That is why He is called "the Tathāgata".

In the world with its devas, bhikkhus, with its Māras, with its brahmas, with this generation of ascetics and brahmins, with its princes and people, the Tathāgata is the conqueror unconquered, truly the seer, the authoritative one. That is why He is called "the Tathāgata".

<sup>103</sup> SUCH THINGS ARE MERELY MUNDANE: see The Buddha's explanation of His own practice in a past life, footnote 31, p.47.

<sup>104</sup> S.V.I.iv.1 'Paṭhama-Paṭipatti-Suttam' ('First Practice Sutta')

<sup>105</sup> D.iii.6 'Pāsādika-Suttam' ('Pleasing Sutta')

**All that is just so (*tath-eva hoti*), not otherwise (*no aññathā*).**

So when, for example, The Buddha says it is impossible for a Buddha to be a woman, impossible for a Brahma to be female, etc., He is merely stating things as they are.<sup>106</sup> He is not giving expression to His own male chauvinism, nor is He simply giving expression to a male chauvinism prevailing in ancient India.<sup>107</sup> A Buddha is devoid of lust, hatred, and delusion; devoid of conceit; devoid of the desire to have disciples. He teaches merely from direct knowledge, nothing else.<sup>108</sup>

**It is with direct knowledge that I, bhikkhus, teach the Dhamma (*abhiññāya*), not without direct knowledge (*no an-abhiññāya*).**

The Buddha does not bluff.<sup>109</sup> He speaks merely according to His own direct knowledge of things.

Say, for example, a woman states categorically: 'It is impossible for a man to bear children.' No intelligent person would suggest that she says it merely because she is a feminist, or because of the feminism prevailing in the modern world. Her statement is simply according to the laws of nature. There is no such thing as a womb or a birth canal in a man's body: it is impossible. Likewise, there is no such thing as a Brahma with a woman's appearance: it is impossible; there is no such thing as a woman Buddha: it is impossible; there is no such thing as eradication or thinning of the fetters independent of practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, the four foundations of mindfulness, or in other words, samatha and vipassanā: it is impossible. There is no other practice leading to the cessation of suffering:<sup>110</sup>

**If any ascetic or Brahmin should speak thus: 'This is not the Fourth Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering, taught by the ascetic Gotama.**

**'Having rejected this Fourth Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering, I shall make known another Fourth Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering': this is impossible.**

#### FREETHINKING AND AGNOSTICISM

These The Buddha's categorical statements do not, of course, agree with modern so-called spirituality, not even with modern so-called Buddhism, because the Buddha's statements are not politically correct. According to modern Political Correctness, all human beings are equally entitled to certain privileges. This

<sup>106</sup> M.III.ii.5 '*Bahu-Dhātuka-Suttaṃ*' ('Many Elements Sutta')

<sup>107</sup> In Sn.iv.9 '*Māgaṇḍiya-Suttaṃ*' ('Māgaṇḍiya Sutta'), The Buddha explains His independence of others' views: "'This I declare", such there is not,/ among Dhammas having decided and grasped./ Views having been observed [as dangerous] their not grasping./ Having decided [that formations are impermanent, suffering, and non-self; arising and perishing], inner peace was seen [appeasement of all defilements].'

<sup>108</sup> A.III.iii.3 '*Gotamaka-Cetiya-Suttaṃ*' ('The Gotamaka-Pagoda Sutta')

<sup>109</sup> This expression was uttered by one of the author's patrons, who explained that whenever there was something he did not understand when studying the Dhamma, he would make sure never to arouse disbelief. Instead, he would always say this to himself, with the knowledge: 'It is just I who does not understand. So there is something here I need to get clarified.'

<sup>110</sup> S.V.XII.ii.9 '*Saṅkāsa-Suttaṃ*' ('Illustration Sutta')

has then come to mean that also all philosophies, religions, etc. are equally entitled to respect. This idea has a history, however, European history.

During the so-called Renaissance (14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries) and so-called Enlightenment (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries), European thought shifted from God and His church as the highest good, to Man and his secular institutions as the highest good: that is, a shift from the religious to the secular. A purely secular world view came to govern legislative, judicial, executive, academic and educational matters.<sup>111</sup> The authority of the Roman Catholic Church and its teachings (with the Pope at its head) was on the wane, gradually to be superseded by the secular doctrine of humanism, the authority of 'Man' (the individual human being).<sup>112</sup>

According to humanism, human beings possess innate natural goodness, wisdom, dignity, divinity, and beauty, and it is their natural right to pursue happiness without constraints from any outside authority, be it religious, political, or economical. Humanist government must thus ensure that all members of society are protected against any infringement of these their natural rights, which means all members of society must be afforded equal rights before the law. Although this is rarely the case in practice, of course, it is always the case in theory. According to humanism, the quondam vices of scepticism, speculation and materialism, were transformed into virtues; virtues seen as necessary for Man to escape from what was regarded as the miasma of tradition, and the superstition that is religion.<sup>113</sup> So everything had to be changed, had to be different. Man's powers of reasoning became the new creed (also called rationalism and free thinking),<sup>114</sup> and was based on the new science (now called classical science)

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<sup>111</sup> THE RENAISSANCE: 'the transitional movement in Europe between medieval and modern times beginning in the 14th century in Italy, lasting into the 17th century, marked by a surge of intellectual activity stimulated by a revival of classical influence, and expressed in a flowering of the arts and literature and by the beginnings of modern science. [LDEL]' THE ENLIGHTENMENT: 'an 18th-century movement marked by a belief in universal human progress and the sovereignty of reason and an emphasis on empirical research in the sciences. [LDEL]' 'the spirit of the French philosophers of the 18c, with a belief in reason and human progress and a questioning of tradition and authority. [ChD]' 'the philosophical movement that occurred in Europe, esp. France, in the 18th cent., in which reason and individualism came to be emphasized at the expense of tradition. [SOED]' SECULAR: '2 a Belonging to the world and its affairs as distinguished from the Church and religion; civil, lay; non-religious, non-sacred.... G. M. Trevelyan *English compromise between the modern secular state and the old religious world*. 3 ... of or belonging to the present or material world as distinguished from the eternal or spiritual world; worldly. G. Priestland *A strong vein of secular scepticism* [SOED].'

<sup>112</sup> HUMANISM: '... Any system that puts human interests and the human mind paramount, rejecting the supernatural, belief in a god, etc [ChD]' '... 3 Devotion to studies promoting human culture; literary culture, esp. that of the Renaissance humanists. 4 a Philosophy & Theology. An outlook or system of thought concerned with human rather than divine or supernatural matters. b Philosophy. A belief or outlook emphasizing common human needs and seeking solely rational ways of solving human problems, and concerned with humankind as responsible and progressive intellectual beings [SOED].'

<sup>113</sup> QUONDAM: That once was or existed; former. MIASMA: 1 (An) infectious or noxious vapour, esp. from putrescent organic matter, which pollutes the atmosphere. 2 fig. A polluting, oppressive, or foreboding atmosphere; a polluting or oppressive influence. E. Pawel *Kafka...felt himself once again drowning in academic miasma*. (SOED)

<sup>114</sup> FREETHINKER: 'a person who forms opinions on the basis of reason, independently of authori-

and mathematics. An inevitable adjunct of such thinking was equality before the law, which in practical terms meant mandatory judicial procedures to protect citizens from abuse by those in power: in theory at least, sometimes in practice, even today. Thus, to bring about the humanistic society by revolution, in the French terror of enlightenment, the guillotine severed thousands of necks in the name of freedom, equality, and brotherhood, and the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*. The changes were so urgent that there was no time for proper judicial procedures to take place. But it marked the beginning of the end of rule by kings, to rule by their subjects. Further developments were the abolition of slavery, and in the modern day the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and then social rights, civil rights, equal rights, women's rights and gay rights and children's rights and animals' rights, etc.

As part of this development, Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883) sat in the Reading Room of the British Museum in London, speculating his way to the doctrine of communism, which is without any doubt the supreme manifestation of humanist political and philosophical thought. At about the same time (also in London), one Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895),<sup>115</sup> (having won fame through his insights into, for example, the membranes of human hair) embarked on a journey as assistant surgeon on board the HMS Rattlesnake off the coast of Australia. There he gained further important insights into the structure of organisms of the sea such as sea anemones, sea squirts, sea nettles, and jellyfish. Based on these as well as insights into geology and palaeontology and similarly profound matters, Mr Huxley became member of the prestigious Royal Society of London, publishing his many insights in that scientific body's journal *Philosophical Transactions*. Together with other modern scientists, Mr Huxley propagated and popularized the new science, such as Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, and the materialist ethic. By his many efforts, he brought to fruition his prophecy that science would achieve 'domination over the whole realm of the intellect.' It was largely through his efforts namely that the educational system now changed from training boys to become gentlemen and virtuous Christians with faith in universal moral laws, to teaching them to be sceptics, iconoclasts, polemicists, and speculators, spending much time measuring and weighing all things material (animate or inanimate), according to the newfangled scientific method. Morality was now declared a purely cultural phenomenon, and ultimate reality together with any other phenomena unknown to the five senses were relegated to

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ty; esp one who questions or rejects religious dogma – FREETHINKING n or adj ) [LDEL]' 'a person who refuses to submit the reasoning process to the control of authority in religious belief; a rationalist [SOED].' RATIONALISM: '1 reliance on reason for establishment of religious truth 2a a theory that reason or the intellect is a source of knowledge superior to and independent of sense perception 2b a view that reason is or should be decisive in solving problems or making moral choices [LDEL] '1 A Theology. The practice of treating reason as the ultimate authority in religion. Also, the practice of explaining supernatural or miraculous events on a rational basis. B Philosophy. The doctrine or belief that reason should be the only guiding principle in life, obviating the need for reliance on or adherence to any form of religious belief [SOED].'

<sup>115</sup> HUXLEY, T.H. Encyclopædia Britannica. *Encyclopædia Britannica Deluxe Edition*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011.

the coal cellar of ‘Don’t know — can’t know.’ Mr Huxley coined a highfalutin name for this creed of ignorance and faithlessness: agnosticism.<sup>116</sup>

After the fall of the British Empire, the new rulers were natives, but being members of the middle and upper classes, they had been trained in the local British education system, many had been trained even in Britain itself, as well as in China, the USA, and USSR. With that background, their ambitions were to get their own countries modernized like Europe and the US. In keeping with Mr Huxley’s prediction, this meant that after independence, modern science (with its attendant freethinking and agnosticism) became the state religion of the new nations, with an emphasis on material development and Western secularism. That is a very brief historical summary of how freethinking and agnosticism (most often the two cannot really be separated) have become the *summum bonum* of modern education, modern government, and modern thought, West and East.<sup>117</sup>

At a glance, such a historical summary is of no interest to one seeking the True Dhamma. Upon reflection, however, it becomes clear that unless one understands what freethinking and agnosticism are, and where they come from, one may inadvertently make it very difficult, if not impossible, for oneself to find and understand the True Dhamma. This is because the ethos of freethinking, agnosticism, scepticism, speculation, etc., is so pervasive in the modern world that according to modern ‘Buddhism’, it is and must as a matter of course be woven into the fabric of the Buddha’s Dispensation in the modern world.<sup>118</sup> There are forever voices, learned and unlearned (both confused), who speak of transforming (modernizing) the Buddha’s Dispensation so that it may be more compatible with the needs of modern Man. We may then ask: ‘Is such an idea compatible with the teachings of the Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha?’

#### DESSERT TROLLEY ‘SPIRITUALITY’

As already mentioned, agnosticism is a device of modern science, the materialist view. The agnostic believes one can know nothing other than what one

<sup>116</sup> AGNOSTIC: ‘A person who holds the view that nothing can be known of the existence of God or of anything beyond material phenomena. Also, a person who is uncertain or non-committal about a particular thing. [SOED]’ ‘1. (a person) believing that we know nothing of things beyond material phenomena, that a Creator, creative cause and an unseen world are things unknown or unknowable 2. (a) sceptic (Coined by English biologist TH Huxley in 1869 from Gr *agnostos* unknown or unknowable, from *a-* (privative), *gnostos* known or knowable, and *-ic*) [ChD]’. In the words of TH Huxley himself: ‘It came into my head as suggestively antithetical to the “Gnostic” of Church history who professed to know so much about the very things of which I was ignorant.’ (AGNOSTICISM Encyclopædia Britannica. *Encyclopædia Britannica Deluxe Edition*. Chicago: *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2011.)

<sup>117</sup> SUMMUM BONNUM: The chief or a supreme good; *spec.* (Ethics) the highest good as the end or determining principle in an ethical system. (SOED)

<sup>118</sup> ETHOS: The characteristic spirit of a culture, era, community, institution, etc., as manifested in its attitudes, aspirations, customs, etc.; the character of an individual as represented by his or her values and beliefs; the prevalent tone of a literary work in this respect. M. Sarton *The daring sense that anything could be said...was surely one of the keys to the Bloomsbury ethos*. R. Fry *The general atmosphere—the ethos, which the works of art of a period exhale*. D. L. Edwards *Baptist congregations...providing a...popular alternative to an Anglicanism still aristocratic in its ethos*. (SOED)

cognizes with one's five senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. The unseen is denied, such as the heavens and hells, and for those who believe in a god, knowledge of the god is denied. We may say the agnostic's dogma is: 'I don't know (or modern science doesn't know), therefore it cannot be known.' The freethinker's dogma, however, says: 'I refuse to accept any authority or dogma other than my own feelings and ideas.' Tenets laid down by a prophet or body of texts are either taken with a pinch of salt or denied as absurd. That is why the freethinker preaches eternal open-mindedness, and regards the faithful as intolerably hardheaded and antagonistic.<sup>119</sup>

Freethinking is a dogma of 'Never certain', while agnosticism is a dogma of 'Don't know—can't know.' These two modes of thought are not new, however. Both are by The Buddha described as wrong view, *micchā-ditṭhi*.<sup>120</sup> And, of course, they overlap. In modern 'Buddhism', credence is given to this view by reference to learned Buddhologists, who say we can never be certain what The Buddha taught because it is certain that the Pali Texts are corrupt: that (so the pundits say) is absolutely certain, no doubt about it.<sup>121</sup>

With this cocktail of doubt and disbelief, the things that are prerogatives in material science, such as discrimination, definitude, and decisiveness, are denied. 'Truth' with a capital T, as well as time-honoured words such as 'religion' and 'faith', are considered intolerably virile. So the terminology has been emasculated. The Truths taught by the Fully Enlightened Buddha are seen as only lower-case 'truths' on a par with truths in computer science, golf, and gastronomy; the Dhamma is seen as merely one of many 'wisdom traditions' on a par with naval traditions, football traditions, and culinary traditions; and the faith that we may have in the Dhamma (by which we may govern our life) is allowed only to be lacklustre 'confidence' on a par with confidence in honesty of government officials, confidence in the skills of our national football team, and confidence in the benevolence of corporate business. The reason for this debilitation is (of course) that for the modern woman and man, indoctrinated in the modern, secular, education system, things such as philosophy, religion, etc., are nothing more than refined kinds of sensual pleasure, spiritual R&R.<sup>122</sup> Hence,

<sup>119</sup> TENET: A doctrine, dogma, principle, or opinion, in religion, philosophy, politics, etc., held by a group or person. Also loosely, any opinion held. Isaiah Berlin *He...was convinced of the validity of his...philosophical tenets*. G. F. Kennan *The ideological tenets of Russian communism*. HARDHEADED: Not easily led (lit. & fig.) or persuaded; obstinate; stubborn. ANTAGONISM: Mutual resistance of opposing forces; active opposition; a feeling of hostility or opposition.... R. Cobden *The Government had not placed itself in antagonism to them*. E. O'Neill *In their whole tense attitudes is clearly revealed the bitter antagonism between them*. A. Lurie *The antagonism we felt for the audience*. A. J. P. Taylor *The general strike seems to have produced a lessening of class antagonism*. (SOED)

<sup>120</sup> WRONG VIEW: please see quotation, footnote 39, p.99.

<sup>121</sup> CREDECE: Belief, acceptance as true. ME. H. James *This programme seemed almost too agreeable for credence*. J. Cheever *An evangelical credence in the romance and sorcery of business success*. ATTACH CREDECE TO, GIVE CREDECE TO believe.

<sup>122</sup> VIRILE: Of, belonging to, or characteristic of a man; manly, masculine. Also, marked by strength, force or vitality. EMASCULATE: 1. Castrate... 2. Deprive of force and vigour; weaken, make effeminate; *esp.* take the force out of (literary work, legislation, etc.) by alterations. PAR WITH: Equality of value or standing; an equal status or level (now chiefly in ON A PAR). Formerly also *spec.*, something that is equal to another thing. N. Mailer *Gilmore had struck him as being*



for example, one is well and properly dressed at the office or when visiting government officials, but sloppily dressed when visiting the temple: the pleasures to be sought in the temple count no more namely than the pleasures to be sought on the beach, in the garden, on the sportsfield, and in the shopping centre. That is the ranking of respect for the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha in modern 'Buddhism'. And, whatever one's personal religion might say, when push comes to shove, modern science's doctrines and dogmas prevail as the only valid 'real' explications and versions of the reality that we live in: hence, morality is conspicuous in Modern Science and modern government by its glaring absence.<sup>123</sup> Modern 'spirituality' is thus nothing more than a delighting in formations, celebrating the glorious jumble, the glittering mosaic and rich tapestry of possibilities, the gloriously eclectic pastiche of the pluralist outlook.<sup>124</sup> That is why the agnostic freethinker can neither conceive of nor tolerate that faith be anything other than a merely political stance, a mere attitude or preference that is forever open to change. One is enjoined joyfully to embrace so much of every thing, that one effectually embraces nothing of any thing. The mantra is: 'Always keep an open mind!'

The waiter wheels up the dessert trolley. 'What'll it be? Black Forest gateau, trifle, crème caramel, chocolate mousse, ice-cream la bombe, or peach Melba? Not sure, can't decide. They're all so delectable, aren't they? Why not a bit of everything!' This is the spirit of modern spirituality. Unless merely frivolous (which is not unusual), it is fanatically and intolerantly open-minded. Indeed, it equates decision with extremism: sees it at best as a form of backward naïvety or superstition, at worst as an irrational and perverse obstinacy, if not insanity. This is the intellectual level of modern 'spirituality'.<sup>125</sup>

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*on an intellectual par with the Court.* R. Hayman *Her...sensitivity was more nearly on a par with his own.* LACKLUSTRE: Lacking in lustre or brightness, dull; lacking in vitality, force, or conviction, uninspired. ... Dickens *A faint lack-lustre shade of grey.* T. Berger *Her expression tended towards the lackluster, though her blue eyes were...bright enough.* R&R: Rest and recreation. colloq. (orig. Military). It refers to leavetaking by soldiers in combat. (SOED)

<sup>123</sup> WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE: colloq. when action must be taken, when a decision, commitment, etc., must be made. CONSPICUOUS: 1 Clearly visible, striking to the eye. 2 Obvious, plainly evident; attracting notice; remarkable, noteworthy. J. Russell *One provision was conspicuous...by its absence.* (SOED)

<sup>124</sup> These phrases have been taken from modern texts on religion and Buddhism.

<sup>125</sup> FRIVOLOUS: Lacking seriousness or sense; silly. A. Alvarez *He thought it frivolous and unbecoming to the serious figure he cut in the world.* FANATIC: Of a person, action, etc.: characterized by or filled with excessive and mistaken enthusiasm, esp. in religion. ... Geo. Eliot *I call a man fanatical when...he...becomes unjust and unsympathetic to men who are out of his own track.* INTOLERANT: Not tolerating opinions or practices different from one's own, esp. in religious matters; denying or refusing to others the right to dissent. H. Morley *One or other of the rival creeds in its most...intolerant form.* NAIVETY: The state or quality of being naive. J. Berger *He must have taken advantage of...your naivety and your good heart.* NAÏVE: Unaffected, unconsciously artless. Also, foolishly credulous, simple. SUPERSTITION: Irrational awe or fear of the unknown etc.; belief in a religion considered false or pagan; religious belief or practice founded on fear or ignorance; credulity regarding religion or the supernatural; an instance of this, a practice, belief, etc., based on such fear or ignorance. ME. ... M. Moorcock *The capital was rotten with superstition. Charm-sellers, occultists...flourished.* OBSTINACY: The quality or condition of being obstinate; stubbornness; inflexibility; persistency. E. F. Benson *She...had a quiet obstinacy that wore down opposition.* INSANITY: The state or condition of being insane; mental derangement. A. G. Gardiner *The*

What then does The Buddha say about such dessert-trolley spirituality?<sup>126</sup>

- [1] Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is doubtful (*kaṅkhati*), uncertain (*vicikicchati*), not decided (*n-ādhimuccati*), and not confident (*na sampasīdati*) about the Teacher, and thus his mind does not incline to ardour, devotion, perseverance, and striving.  
As his mind does not incline to ardour, devotion, perseverance, and striving, that is the first mental stump that he has not abandoned.
- [2] Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is doubtful, uncertain, not decided, and not confident about the Dhamma, and thus his mind does not incline to ardour, devotion, perseverance, and striving.  
As his mind does not incline to ardour, devotion, perseverance, and striving, that is the second mental stump that he has not abandoned.
- [3] Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is doubtful, uncertain, not decided, and not confident about the Sangha, and thus his mind does not incline to ardour, devotion, perseverance, and striving.  
As his mind does not incline to ardour, devotion, perseverance, and striving, that is the third mental stump that he has not abandoned.
- [4] Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is doubtful, uncertain, not decided, and not confident about the training, and thus his mind does not incline to ardour, devotion, perseverance, and striving.  
As his mind does not incline to ardour, devotion, perseverance, and striving, that is the fourth mental stump that he has not abandoned.<sup>127</sup>

A stump is what is left when a tree has been chopped down or has fallen. A stump is stiff, of no good use, and will yield no fruits. And because the ‘dessert trolley’ dogma demands that every decision be accompanied by indecision, because it deliberately wavers (always more than willing to take various sides and look up to many teachers), it is like a stump: of no good use, that will yield no fruits, supramundane fruits, that is.

Leaving one’s mind forever open in this way means always to foster what in Pali is called *vicikicchā*. It can be translated ‘doubt’, ‘scepticism’, ‘indecision’, ‘vacillation’, or ‘uncertainty’. However it is translated, *vicikicchā* is a hindrance; a stump; it is *akusala*, nothing else.

Thus, although the open, agnostic, freethinking mind may be tolerant and flexible with regard to the many teachings that exist in the world, in history, in ‘Buddhism’, etc., this openness cannot but forbid proper development of the morality training, in the slightest faults seeing danger;<sup>128</sup> this openness cannot but forbid proper development of the concentration training (whereby the mind is

*mother...whom she slew in one of her fits of insanity. A. Clare He was...found not guilty by reason of insanity. 2 Extreme folly or irrationality; an instance of this.*

<sup>126</sup> M.I.ii.6 ‘*Ceto-Khila-Suttam*’ (‘Mental Stump Sutta’) (STUMP: Part of a felled or fallen tree that remains attached to root & projecting from ground, remnant of something (esp. branch, limb, tooth, implement, cigar) from which the greater part has been cut or broken or worn off.’ (POD)) The commentary explains that this refers to the mind that is stiff like useless stumps in a field that cannot produce any fruit.

<sup>127</sup> The Buddha explains also a fifth mental stump: ‘Here, a bhikkhu is angry and displeased with his companions in the holy life, resentful and callous towards them...’

<sup>128</sup> This is how The Buddha says the bhikkhu should undertake the precepts (e.g. M.I.i.6 ‘*Ākaṅkheyya Sutta*’ (‘If a Bhikkhu Should Wish’)).

closed one-pointedly upon its object); and forbidding those two preliminary trainings, of course, this openness cannot but forbid proper development of the wisdom training. That is how openness is an obstruction to proper practice. And that is why The Buddha says the bhikkhu who has not abandoned such openness, who has not abandoned doubt, uncertainty, indecision, and scepticism about The Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, and the trainings of morality, concentration, and wisdom, for him to

come to growth, increase, and fulfilment in this Dhamma-Vinaya: that is impossible.

Strong words indeed, but it is hardly deep and profound Dhamma. Throughout history women and men have known very well that without absolute faith, decision, and certainty, one cannot succeed in great enterprises, be they of virtue or vice. Seeking The Buddha's Teachings with the earnest desire to understand the Truth and put an end to birth, ageing, and death, is the greatest of all great enterprises of virtue. But here a crucial factor is *pāramī*.

When sufficient *pāramī* are there, faith in the Dhamma arises. The absence of wavering, the certainty and delight, they arise namely because of *pāramī*. When insufficient *pāramī* are there, faith in the Dhamma may not arise at all, for it will arise in other objects. Then again, there may be sufficient *pāramī* for faith in the Dhamma to arise, but it is weak 'open' faith: dessert-trolley faith. We may also call it badly-thatched faith. As a badly thatched hut has gaps through which rain will enter, so does the open mind allow (even invite) doubt to enter.<sup>129</sup> Open faith is forever shifting, keen to look around, embracing this... and that... and the other... and then the Dhamma.

This was not the case with the wanderer Subhadda, whom we mentioned earlier. When The Buddha told him enlightenment exists only in the Buddha's Dispensation, Subhadda did not waver or argue; he did not stamp his Politically Correct foot in the ground. His *pāramī* did not allow such folly. His *pāramī* saw to it that his response was spontaneous, unhesitating, and wholehearted:

Excellent, Venerable Sir (*abhikkantaṃ, Bhante*)! Excellent, Venerable Sir (*abhikkantaṃ, Bhante*)!

Just as if, Venerable Sir, He the upside down were to turn upright, or the concealed were to reveal, or to the lost were to show the way, or into the dark were to carry an oil-lamp [with the thought]: 'Let those with eyesight see sights', so the Bhagavā in many ways has made the Dhamma clear.

I, Venerable Sir, to the Bhagava go for refuge, and to the Dhamma, and to the bhikkhu Sangha. May I, Venerable Sir, in the presence of the Bhagavā get the going forth, may I get the higher ordination.

According to the Pali, Subhadda got the higher ordination as a bhikkhu, he practised accordingly, and then realized the unsurpassed goal of the holy life. The Pali says:

***Aññataro kho panāyasmā Subhaddo arahataṃ ahoṣi.***

Another of the arahants did the Reverend Subhadda become.

***So Bhagavato pacchimo sakkhisāvako ahoṣīti.***

He was to the Bhagavā the last 'face-to-face' disciple.

'Excellent, Venerable Sir! Excellent, Venerable Sir!' Do we want to deny ourselves such an outpouring of enthusiasm for the Bhagavā's Teachings?

<sup>129</sup> This is a reference to Dh.p.i.13 'Yamaka-Vaggo' ('The Pairs Chapter')

Deny ourselves we shall if we cultivate doubt, scepticism, indecision, vacillation, uncertainty; in other words, if we leave our mind open. If, however, we thatch our mind well, then do we keep the raindrops of irresolution from entering our temple of faith; we hold the hounds of doubt at bay; and keep the wolf of scepticism from the door: the mind door that is.<sup>130</sup> Doing so, we may know what it is to have drunk.

The Buddha explains:<sup>131</sup>

**And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu know what it is to have drunk?**

**Here, when the Dhamma-Vinaya proclaimed by the Tathāgata is being taught, a bhikkhu gains enthusiasm for the meaning (*labhati attha-vedam*), gains enthusiasm for the Dhamma (*labhati dhamma-vedam*), gains Dhamma-related joy (*labhati dhamm-ūpasamhitam pāmojjam*).**

That, bhikkhus, is how a bhikkhu knows what it is to have drunk.

This quality of enthusiasm for and joy over The Buddha's Teachings is necessary, says The Buddha, for one to be capable of **growth, increase and fulfilment in this Dhamma-Vinaya**.<sup>132</sup>

THE KĀLĀMA REFERENCE?

There should be nothing further to discuss. But the open mind is fecund and creative. And one of its most ~~modest~~ and pervasive creations is to claim that belief in enlightenment as exclusive to The Buddha's Teachings is an arrogant, élitist stance, bound to lead to conflict. But is this a viable proposition? Is it even intelligent?<sup>133</sup>

To claim with a mind of arrogance that enlightenment is exclusive to a Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha's Teachings is indeed arrogant; to claim it with a mind of conceit (the superiority conceit) is indeed élitist. But to claim that enlightenment is exclusive to a Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha's Teachings because that Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha Himself very clearly says so, and one has taken refuge in that Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha, how, pray, can that be arrogant and élitist? And how can one who has taken refuge in The Buddha contradict The Buddha?

Refuge in The Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, is the foundation of our practice. So we should ask ourselves the fundamental question: 'With what mentality have I taken my refuge?'

If it is with the desert-trolley mentality, we can take refuge in any number of mutually contradictory things. This is the open-minded pluralist mentality. But as just discussed, according to the Buddha such a mentality is a hindrance. If

<sup>130</sup> HOLD/KEEP SB AT BAY: prevent (an enemy, pursuers, etc) from coming near: *I'm trying to keep my creditors at bay*. KEEP THE WOLF THE DOOR: have enough money to avoid hunger and need: *Their wages are barely enough to keep the wolf from the door*. (OALD)

<sup>131</sup> This is one quality out of eleven. Please see footnote 29, p.28.

<sup>132</sup> ENTHUSIASM: Strong intensity of feeling in favour of something or someone arising from a strong conviction of correctness, worthiness, effectiveness, etc.; passionate eagerness or interest. (Foll. by *for, to do.*) (SOED)

<sup>133</sup> FECUND: fertile, productive: (*fig.*) *a fecund imagination*. ÉLITE: '(often derogatory) social group considered to be the best or most important because of their power, talent, wealth, etc.: *the ruling scientific elite*. ° [attrib] *An elite force, regiment*. VIABLE: 'sound and workable; feasible: *a viable plan, proposition, proposal, etc*' (OALD)

we want to progress on the Path, we need therefore to dispense with modern politics, freethinking, and agnosticism; we need to dispense with the mentality of a specialist in jellyfish and sea anemones. Instead, we need to embrace the mentality of faith in the one Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha, and His one body of teachings. As just discussed, without such faith there can be no progress in the Dhamma.<sup>134</sup>

Freethinking and agnosticism are so ingrained in modern 'spirituality', however, that they are seen as indispensable even to modern 'Buddhism'. The forever quoted and forever misrepresented 'Kālāma Sutta' is championed as central to the Teachings of The Buddha; as a 'charter' (almost a directive) to free-thinking and agnosticism, when it is nothing of the sort.<sup>135</sup> This peripheral sutta is nonetheless held up as a litmus test by which the Canon (with a capital 'C') may be bowdlerized, and a modern canon (with lower-case 'c') manufactured. Integral to this procedure is the notion of 'primitive Buddhism'. It is the notion that what The Buddha actually taught was unsophisticated, on a par with modern pop-psychology and the like; that enlightenment is no big deal; and that learning is an undesirable, distracting diversion.<sup>136</sup> With that agenda in mind, Dr Knock from Gotham University spends much time and 'learned' effort to prove by historical linguistics that the Pali Canon is perfectly corrupt, the learned commentaries depraved and misleading, and the Abhidhamma a spurious and later addition far too technical and sophisticated ever to have emanated from a Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha.

Thus we have a newfangled modern fifth great reference: 'What I like, which requires little learning, and agrees with my modern notions, that I say is the True Dhamma. What I do not like, which requires much learning, and does not agree with my modern notions, that I say cannot be the True Dhamma.' This great modern reference is antithetical to the four great references laid down by The Buddha, for its only authority is one's own inflated conceit. By this reference, faith and refuge-taking have been extirpated, as almost a heresy.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>134</sup> MENTALITY: 'Mental character or disposition; (an) outlook... U. Le Guin *These Port managers...tended to acquire the bureaucratic mentality: they said No automatically*. DISPENSE WITH: Do away with (a requirement or necessity); make unnecessary or superfluous. F. Hall *Familiar facts dispense with all need to draw on the imagination*. (SOED)

<sup>135</sup> A.III.II.ii.5 The popular name for this sutta is '*Kālāma-Suttaṃ*', although it is in the Pali of the Sixth Council, it is called '*Kesamutti-Suttaṃ*' ('Kesamutti Sutta')

<sup>136</sup> INGRAINED: In the inmost texture; deeply rooted, inveterate. CHARTER: A written document delivered by the monarch or legislature, esp. granting privileges or recognizing rights... a written constitution. DIRECTIVE: Something which directs; *spec.* a general instruction for procedure or action given to a subordinate. PERIPHERAL: Marginal, superficial, of minor importance; not essential or relevant (*to*), subordinate (*to*).... [*topics peripheral to the main theme* (OALD)] LITMUS TEST: a test for acids or alkalis using litmus paper; fig. a simple test to establish true character. CANON: ... any collection or list of sacred works accepted as genuine. BOWDLERIZE: Expurgate (a book etc.) by removing or altering material considered improper or offensive; emasculate. (SOED)

<sup>137</sup> AGENDA: The set of underlying motives or ideals of a particular individual or group. DEPRAVED: Misconstrue, misrepresent; pervert the meaning or intention of. SPURIOUS: Superficially resembling or simulating something, but lacking its genuine character or qualities; not true or genuine; false, counterfeit; (of a piece of writing) not proceeding from the reputed source or author. ANTITHESIS: Direct or striking opposition of character or function (*of, between two things*). O.

One might be tempted to call this fifth great reference the Kālāma reference, but that would be to misrepresent the sutta. Because, were one to read the ‘Kālāma Sutta’ in its entirety (not just a small passage out of context); were one to contemplate the sutta in its entirety, in the context of the Buddha’s Teachings in their entirety, it would take much ingenuity (if not blindness) to declare it a charter for freethinking.<sup>138</sup> The sutta is about making an informed decision, according to certain criteria. First, The Buddha advises the Kālāmas how to decide which things they should give up:

**When you, Kālāmas, yourselves know: ‘These things are unwholesome (*ime dhammā akusalā*), these things are blameworthy (*ime dhammā sāvajjā*), these things are censured by the wise (*ime dhammā viññu-garahitā*), these things when carried out and undertaken lead to detriment and suffering’ (*ahitāya dukkhāya samvattanti’ti*), then you, Kālāmas, should give them up.**

Afterwards, The Buddha advises the Kālāmas how to decide which things they should undertake and live by:

**When you, Kālāmas, yourselves know: ‘These things are wholesome (*ime dhammā kusalā*), these things are blameless (*ime dhammā anavajjā*), these things are praised by the wise (*ime dhammā viññu-ppasatthā*), these things when carried out and undertaken lead to benefit and happiness’ (*hitāya sukhāya samvattanti’ti*), then you, Kālāmas, should undertake and live by them.**

Where is the free-thinking? Nowhere. Not surprising, since free-thinking is alien to The Buddha’s Teachings. None of the criteria that He here lays down can be worked out by thinking, as thinking hinges on one’s rationale, one’s logic. So, if for example, one’s rationale says the interests of one’s nation is the sole criterion for foreign policy, it stands to reason that benefit and happiness will ensue if one invades foreign countries, slaughters the inhabitants willy-nilly, and destroys their homes and infrastructure, in order to gain uninhibited access to and control of their resources. This is a time-honoured principle of state imperialism past and present. Again, if one’s rationale denies that happiness can be associated both with the unwholesome and the wholesome, it stands to reason that detriment and suffering are best avoided by, for example, murdering the unwanted child in the womb; it stands to reason that benefit and happiness will be gained by, for example, taking one’s children out fishing (to torture and kill innocent beings), and introducing them to the pleasures of watching sports on TV, and drinking wine and beer. After all, the pursuit of happiness is at stake. One may thus understand that ‘reason’ and ‘logic’ are arbitrary, and that

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Chadwick *The antithesis between Catholic and Protestant*. ANTITHETICAL: Of the nature of antithesis. EXTIRPATE: Root out, eradicate, get rid of, (a heresy, vice, or other abstract thing). D. Murphy *Our antagonisms had become too deeply rooted for either of us to extirpate them*. (SOED) HERESY: Belief contrary to the authorized teaching of the religious community to which one ostensibly belongs. (ChD)

<sup>138</sup> INGENUITY: Orig., high mental ability, talent, intelligence, discernment. Now *spec.* cleverness at making, inventing, or contriving things, esp. of a curious or unexpected nature; skilfulness of contrivance or design. A. S. Byatt *She had supposed human ingenuity would find ways round food shortages and overpopulation*. INFORMED: Knowing or acquainted with the facts; educated, knowledgeable.... W. K. Hancock *Informed opinion was ready to welcome the report*.

taking refuge in them is to seek safety and certainty in capricious, and specious phantoms: it is an absurd, indeed hazardous, undertaking.<sup>139</sup>

Now, for those who have taken The Buddha as their refuge, who believe in His teachings about kamma, the rationale is constant and quite different. Since The Buddha explains that (regardless of the rationale) to torment and kill other beings leads to detriment and suffering for oneself, it stands to reason that one should abstain from such things. But how many of those who believe in this teaching of The Buddha have been able to verify it with their own direct knowledge? Almost none. It is a very difficult thing to do. Why then abstain from tormenting and killing other beings? Because of faith, with a capital 'F'. Faith in The Buddha's enlightenment; faith in the veracity of His Teachings. For just about everyone in the past millenia, such faith is by necessity blind.

We may then say: 'There is no need for faith: it stands to reason that one cannot perpetrate evil without some natural retribution.' But it does not stand to reason. That is why, since the Second World War, the slaughter and oppression of innocent people has reached heights never reached before, and the arms industry has reached demonic dimensions, as has the abortion industry.

Thus we may understand that in the 'Kālāma Sutta', The Buddha speaks of authoritative criteria that need to be learned. They need to be learned from someone who knows, and they need to be believed in. This The Buddha explains to a Brahmin student called Subha:<sup>140</sup>

**Here, student, having approached an ascetic or Brahmin, a woman or man is not an inquirer [asking]: 'What, Venerable Sir, is wholesome; what is unwholesome? What is blameworthy, what is blameless? What should be practised, what should not be practised? What, by my doing it, is to my long-term detriment and suffering, or else, what, by my doing it, is to my long-term benefit and happiness?' Because of accomplishing and undertaking such actions, she or he at the breakup of the body, after death, in perdition, in a bad destination, in an infernal place, in hell is reborn.**

**But if she or he, at the breakup of the body, after death, in perdition, in a bad destination, in an infernal place, in hell is not reborn, if she or he as a human being returns, then wherever she or he is reborn, she or he is stupid.**

**This is the way, student, that leads to stupidity, namely, having approached an ascetic or Brahmin, one is not an inquirer [asking]: 'What, Venerable Sir, is wholesome; what is unwholesome? What is**

<sup>139</sup> HINGE: Depend decisively on. [*Everything hinges on the outcome of these talks.*(OALD)] RATIONALE: The fundamental or underlying reason for or basis of a thing; a justification. R. G. Myers *The main rationale for promoting rapid educational expansion was...an economic one.* LOGIC: 1 The branch of philosophy that deals with forms of reasoning and thinking, esp. inference and scientific method. J. S. Mill *Logic is not the science of Belief, but...of Proof, or Evidence.* 2 A system or scheme of logic.... The inferential procedures or structure of some field of inquiry... R. G. Collingwood *As mathematics is the logic of physics, so law is the logic of politics.* ARBITRARY: Based on mere opinion or preference as opp. to the real nature of things; capricious, unpredictable, inconsistent. H. G. Wells *Those arbitrary standards by which we classify people into moral and immoral.* CAPRICIOUS: Guided by caprice; readily swayed by whim or fancy; inconstant. Of a thing: subject to sudden change, irregular, unpredictable. J. Cheever *They cultivated tropical plants in a capricious climate.* SPECIOUS: Superficially genuine or correct but in reality wrong or false; (of an argument, reasoning, etc.) misleadingly sound or convincing... [*a specious argument.*(OALD)] PHANTOM: (An) illusion, (a) delusion, (a) deception; a figment of the imagination, a lie; falsity, unreality. ABSURD: Out of harmony with reason or propriety; incongruous; inappropriate; unreasonable; ridiculous, silly. HAZARDOUS: Fraught with hazard, risky.... Dependent on chance; casual, fortuitous.(SOED)

<sup>140</sup> M.III.iv.5 'Cūḷa-Kamma-Vibhaṅga-Suttaṃ' ('The Small Kamma-Analysis Sutta')

**blameful, what is blameless? What should be practised, what should not be practised? What, by my doing it, is to my long-term detriment and suffering, or else, what, by my doing it, is to my long-term benefit and happiness?'**

Who are the modern Brahmins? We just discussed it. As the jellyfish specialist predicted, modern science has gained 'domination over the whole realm of the intellect'. But modern science denies that anything can be intrinsically unwholesome or wholesome. Modern science denies the workings of kamma; it knows almost nothing about the detrimental and beneficial effects of actions in this life, and absolutely nothing about such effects in future lives. So to approach a modern scientist and inquire about the wholesome and unwholesome, etc., is to tread the way to stupidity, the modern scientist's own way. Do not forget, it is the modern scientist who has devised modern political theory, modern economical theory, the demonic modern military machine, including weapons of mass destruction, as well as the various 'safe' procedures of the modern 'medical' practice of murdering the unwanted child in the womb.

So if we want to know what is to our long-term detriment and suffering and long-term benefit and happiness, we need to approach someone who understands the workings of kamma either by direct knowledge or by learning knowledge. The Buddha explains it to the same Brahmin student:

**Here, student, having approached an ascetic or Brahmin, a woman or man is an inquirer. [asking]: 'What, Venerable Sir, is wholesome; what is unwholesome? What is blameful, what is blameless? What should be practised, what should not be practised? What, by my doing it, is to my long-term detriment and suffering, or else, what, by my doing it, is to my long-term benefit and happiness?' Because of accomplishing and undertaking such actions, she or he at the breakup of the body, after death, in a good destination, a heavenly world is reborn.**

**But if she or he, at the breakup of the body, after death, in a good destination, a heavenly world is not reborn, if she or he as a human being returns, then wherever she or he is reborn, she or he is very wise.**

**This is the way, student, that leads to great wisdom, namely, having approached an ascetic or Brahmin, one is an inquirer [asking]: 'What, Venerable Sir, is wholesome; what is unwholesome? What is blameful, what is blameless? What should be practised, what should not be practised? What, by my doing it, is to my long-term detriment and suffering, or else, what, by my doing it, is to my long-term benefit and happiness?'**

Thus, it is abundantly clear that not one of the criteria given by The Buddha in the 'Kālāma Sutta' encourages free-thinking. As for agnosticism, of course, we already mentioned that such a view is a wrong view.

The 'Kālāma Sutta' is about kamma, unwholesome and wholesome. It is not about the teachings particular to a Buddha (the four Noble Truths), nor is it addressed to devotees of The Buddha. But once The Buddha had concluded His discussion with them, the Kālāmas (like Subhadda) expressed their extreme enthusiasm for His teaching, and then they took refuge in The Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. By doing so, of course, they closed the door to free-thinking and agnosticism, because they have made the decision: 'The Buddha knows, He and His teachings are my refuge, the authority that governs the rationale for my actions of body, speech, and mind.' Unless one's refuge-taking is done with such decision, it is no more than lip service.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> LIP SERVICE: service that is proffered but not performed; insincere expressions of support, re-



## DISCRIMINATION OF THE PROPER OCCASION

Just because the Kālamas made that decision, does this mean they thenceforth went around fomenting conflict? Does the decided person *per se* go around fomenting conflict? It is very difficult to see why this should be the case.<sup>142</sup>

To claim that belief in the exclusiveness of The Buddha's Teachings is a recipe for conflict is the same as to claim that buying a kitchen knife is a recipe for murder, or that driving a car is a recipe for a car accident. It is an invalid proposition. There is no reason in the world why belief in the exclusiveness of The Buddha's Teachings in itself would lead to conflict.

What about conflict among Buddhists? We already discussed it. If anyone makes a claim about a certain understanding of the Dhamma and the practice, we just refer it to the suttas and Vinaya. The Buddha laid down the four Great References precisely to prevent conflict.

If anyone considers it proper to criticize teachings outside the *Buddha-Sāsana*, or proper to criticize such&such an explanation by some recent living or deceased Buddhist teacher, we need to remember that The Buddha nowhere says one should not criticize that which deserves criticism, on the contrary.

The Buddha says there are four ways in which one may speak of things:<sup>143</sup>

- 1) One criticizes that which deserves criticism but one does not praise that which deserves praise.
- 2) One praises that which deserves praise but one does not criticize that which deserves criticism.
- 3) One neither criticizes that which deserves criticism nor praises that which deserves praise.
- 4) One both criticizes that which deserves criticism and praises that which deserves praise.

According to *modern* spirituality, only number two will do: one praises that which deserves praise but one does not criticize that which deserves criticism. The Buddha, however, is not an adherent of *modern* spirituality; He is not Politically Correct. Why not? Because His first priority is the Truth, with a capital T. That is why He says the most admirable of the four is the one who not only praises that which deserves praise but also criticizes that which deserves criticism: number four. But with a caveat:<sup>144</sup>

**Discrimination of the proper occasion** (*kāl-aññutā*).

Nowhere in The Buddha's Teachings can we find Him criticizing criticism of that which deserves to be criticized. What we can find is the injunction that there is a proper occasion for such criticism.

spect, etc. (SOED)

<sup>142</sup> FOMENT: Foster, stimulate, or instigate (a sentiment, a course of conduct, sedition, etc.)... V. Glendinning *She...orchestrated and fomented the quarrels and alliances of her...young men.* (SOED) *PER SE*: by or of itself; intrinsically: *The drug is not harmful per se, but is dangerous when taken with alcohol.* (OALD)

<sup>143</sup> A.IV.ii.5.10 '*Potaliya-Suttaṃ*' ('Potaliya Sutta'). Please see quotation on the inside flap of the back of the book.

<sup>144</sup> CAVEAT: warning; proviso: *I recommend the deal, but with certain caveats.* (OALD)

The improper occasion for criticism is especially the occasion when one is speaking to those who believe in what according to The Buddha's Teachings is a wrong belief, whether they believe themselves to be 'Buddhists' or otherwise. Unless they directly ask one to give one's opinion, one should not trouble them by criticizing the things they believe in. It is plain and simple bad manners. And however one may word one's criticism, one should be cautious about what one says. One should at all times remember The Buddha's words about proper speech.<sup>145</sup>

- ☉ **Whatever speech the Tathāgata knows is unfactual, untrue, without purpose, and which to others is undear and displeasing, that speech the Tathāgata does not utter.**
- ☉ And whatever speech the Tathāgata knows is factual, true, without purpose, and which to others is undear and displeasing, that speech also the Tathāgata does not utter.
- ☉ And whatever speech the Tathāgata knows is factual, true, with purpose, and which to others is undear and displeasing, in such a case, the Tathāgata is one who knows the occasion (*kāl-aññū*) for expressing that speech.
- ☉ **Whatever speech the Tathāgata knows is unfactual, untrue, without purpose, and which to others is dear and pleasing to others, that speech the Tathāgata does not utter.**
- ☉ And whatever speech the Tathāgata knows is factual, true, without purpose, and which to others is dear, that speech also the Tathāgata does not utter.
- ☉ And whatever speech the Tathāgata knows is factual, true, with a purpose, and which to others is dear, in such a case, the Tathāgata is one who knows the occasion for expressing that speech.

What is the reason? There is, Prince, the Tathāgata's sympathy for beings (*Tathāgatassa sattesu anukampā*).

The Buddha gives six criteria for proper speech, but we are here concerned with only the one:

- ☉ **And whatever speech the Tathāgata knows is factual, true, with purpose, and which to others is undear and displeasing, in such a case, the Tathāgata is one who knows the occasion (*kāl-aññū*) for expressing that speech.**

Is this very deep and profound Dhamma exclusive to a Fully Enlightened Buddha? No, it is part and parcel of rudimentary breeding: knowing the difference between good manners and bad manners.

Anyone who is a gentlewoman or gentleman will have a sense of when to speak and when not to speak. But even then we must beware of making an equation between The Buddha and ourselves. What we may claim is 'sympathy for beings' is all too often merely the desire to be 'the teacher'. How easy it is to pontificate. How pleasing is the subtle but profound satisfaction that arises when one begins to teach 'things spiritual', when one is given the opportunity to play Buddha. But however clever and gifted we and our devotees may think we are, we are not Buddhas; a busybody's busyness is not detached. When the busybody meets resistance, the sympathetic detachment turns to anger.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>145</sup> M.II.i.8 '*Abhaya-Rāja-Kumāra-Suttaṃ*' ('Prince Abhaya Sutta')

<sup>146</sup> PONTIFICATE: Act like a pontiff [chief priest], claim to be infallible. Also, be pompously dogmatic. b verb trans. Utter in a pontifical manner. M. Dibdin *A didactic voice began pontificating about the ecology of the Po delta*. BUSYBODY: A meddling, prying person; a mischief-maker.

No disciple of The Buddha has The Buddha's ability to see exactly what speech will help a person. Very seldom, therefore, will the occasion be right for us to speak the factual and true that is with a good purpose, but which is unear and displeasing to our listeners. In fact, it is more likely that there will never be such an occasion our entire life, unless we have been asked to explain.

It is not for us to go about teaching without having been asked to. Other people's business is other people's business, and our only business is our own business. If other people ask us to advise them in their business, only then has their business become our business. Thus, for example, there may be those who have explicitly asked to be instructed. And in the case of bhikkhus, The Buddha actually says bhikkhus should correct each other's behaviour. In either case, however, discretion is advisable. Discretion and ultimately minding one's own business is the surest way to avoid conflict.

If we with care just teach according to The Buddha's teachings, when we have been asked to, then no conflict will arise. There may be listeners who are dissatisfied with what we have said, but that is not the same as to say we have fomented conflict. Such listeners may grumble, but again that is their own business. How often did this not happen to The Buddha Himself. Dissatisfied listeners may upon the rare occasion seek clarification, and given clarification, how often are they not pleased! And why do such listeners seek clarification? Because they want to know the Truth. That is what makes them rare.

One may wish to avoid conflict by looking up to many teachers, by encouraging others to look up to many teachers, by approving of such action and praising it. One may wish to avoid conflict by denying The Buddha's own words about the exclusiveness of His Teachings; one may wish to avoid conflict by denying The Buddha's own words about the exclusiveness of Samatha and Vipassanā, the four foundations of mindfulness. Again, one may encourage others to deny those things, and approve and praise such action. Doing so, however, one is pandering to people's defilements.<sup>147</sup> By such pandering one may gain fame and requisites, but one corrupts one's own faith in The Buddha's Supreme Enlightenment, one corrupts others, and one corrupts the Dhamma, for such a teaching is plain and simple a-Dhamma (*a-Dhamma*), not the Dhamma.<sup>148</sup>

Conflict may indeed be avoided by adopting such a contrary Dhamma, encouraging others to do so too, approving of it and praising it, but at what cost? At the cost of the Truth, at the cost of the *Sāsana*.

To understand how serious the matter is, we may imagine that a bhikkhu held and taught such an a-Dhamma. He would then be what is called **a speaker of a-Dhamma** (*a-Dhamma-vādī*). According to the Vinaya, such a bhikkhu could be suspended for his misbehaviour and become **a person to whom one should not pay respect** (*a-vaṇḍiya puggala*). In the Vinaya, The Buddha says the bhikkhu who pays re-

<sup>147</sup> PANDER: assist in the gratification of (a desire, weakness, etc.), indulge (a person); be subservient to. Times *In his quest for popular support, he panders to the least responsible elements in the community.* M. Meyer *A young poet who did not seek to pander to fashion.*

<sup>148</sup> Please see discussion and quotations to the contrary, under 'Here Only, Subhadda', p.307.

spect to such a bhikkhu who teaches a-Dhamma commits an offence against the Vinaya.<sup>149</sup> No small matter is it to trifle with the Truth.

No small matter it is to trifle with one's hardwon faith. Why hardwon? Because the arising of a Buddha is hard to come by, and hard to come by is also faith in a Buddha. If we have it, we must look after it as the one-eyed man looks after his one eye. We must be stingy with our faith, not squander it on many teachers. We must do as Subhadda, for only then can we reap the benefits that he reaped.

The Pali explains that Subhadda had heard people say that on that day, in the third watch of the night, the Parinibbāna of The Buddha would take place. Being doubtful about the alleged enlightenment of other famous teachers of the time, and believing The Buddha would clarify his doubt, Subhadda went to see The Buddha at once. The Pali describes his thoughts:<sup>150</sup>

**I have heard aged and elderly, wanderers, teachers and teachers' teachers saying: 'Seldom, occasionally, do Blessed Ones, Arahants, Fully Self-Enlightened Buddhas arise in the world.'**

There was no time to lose! Aeons pass between the arising of one Buddha and the next. If we miss it this time, we may also miss it next time, for next time a Buddha arises, we may have been reborn far, far away from The Buddha; we may have been reborn in a place where The Buddha comes frequently, but because we may have developed wrong view, we may never give alms to Him and His monks, and never go and listen to Him; we may have been reborn as an animal or ghost; we may even have been reborn in hell; we may have been reborn in the immaterial realm. In any of those cases, we would have no opportunity to hear the Dhamma. That is why we should make use of the opportunity now. That is why The Buddha routinely would say to the bhikkhus:<sup>151</sup>

**Bhikkhus, achieve with diligence** (*Bhikkhave, appamādena sampādettha*):

- **a Buddha's arising is hard to come by in the world** (*Buddh-uppādo du-llabho lokasmiṃ*);
- **the acquisition of humanity is hard to come by** (*manussa-paṭilābho du-llabho*);
- **the attainment of faith is hard to come by** (*saddhā-sampatti du-llabhā*);
- **the going forth is hard to come by** (*pabbajjā du-llabhā*);
- **hearing the True Dhamma is hard to come by in the world** (*Sa-Ddhamma-ssavanaṃ du-llabhaṃ lokasmi'nti*).

## Endnote

[Herewith a quotation from the *Atthasālinī*, the Commentary to the *Dhamma-Saṅgani* (first book of the Abhidhamma).<sup>152</sup>]

<sup>149</sup> The Buddha lists ten types of person to whom a bhikkhu must not pay respect. (Vin.Cv.VI.312 'A-Vandīya-Puggalā' ('Persons Not to Be Paid Respect To'))

<sup>150</sup> D.ii.3 'Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ' ('Great Parinibbāna Sutta')

<sup>151</sup> Please see, for example, the commentary to SuN.i.4/S.I.VII.ii.1 'Kasibhāradvāja-Suttaṃ' ('Kasibhāradvāja Sutta'). The Buddha explains these things in various ways in various texts.

<sup>152</sup> Published by PTS as *The Expositor* (translator Pe Maung Tin, Professor of Pali at the College,

One of those bhikkhus who studied the Abhidhamma once sat in the midst of bhikkhus who knew all the five Nikāyas, and quoting the text (sutta) from the Abhidhamma taught the Dhamma thus:

- ☉ 'The matter aggregate is indeterminate; of the four aggregates some are wholesome, some unwholesome, some indeterminate.
- ☉ 'The ten bases are indeterminate; the two bases may be wholesome, unwholesome, or indeterminate.
- ☉ 'The sixteen elements are indeterminate; the two elements may be wholesome, unwholesome, or indeterminate.
- ☉ 'The Origin Truth is indeterminate; the Path Truth is wholesome; the Cessation Truth is unwholesome; the Suffering Truth may be wholesome, unwholesome, or indeterminate.
- ☉ 'The ten faculties are indeterminate; the faculty of grief is unwholesome; the faculty of 'I shall come to know the unknown' is wholesome; the four faculties may be wholesome or unwholesome; six faculties may be wholesome, unwholesome or indeterminate.'

A bhikkhu seated there asked: 'Dhamma-teacher, you quote a long text as though you were going to encircle Mount Sineru: what text is it?'

'Abhidhamma Text, friend.'

'Why do you quote Abhidhamma Text? Does it not behove you to quote other texts, spoken by The Buddha?'

'Friend, by whom was the Abhidhamma taught?'

'Not by The Buddha.'

'But did you, friend, study the Vinaya-Piṭaka?'

'No, friend, I did not.'

'I think it is because you have not studied the Vinaya-Piṭaka, that you speak in ignorance.'

'I have, actually, studied some Vinaya.'

'Then that has been wrongly grasped. You must have been seated at one end of the assembly and dozing. A person who goes forth with teachers such as yourself to give the Three-Refuges, or a person who receives the higher ordination under a Sangha of teachers such as yourself, who have studied the Vinaya badly, is in danger.

And why? Because of this badly 'studying some Vinaya.' For it has been said by The Buddha: 'If without any intention to disparage the Vinaya one were to instigate another, saying: "Study the Suttas or Verses or Abhidhamma first and afterwards you will learn the Vinaya": there is no offence in him.'

[In the bhikkhunī Vinaya, The Buddha says a bhikkhunī is guilty of an offence] '...if she asks about Abhidhamma or Vinaya after getting permission [to ask] about the Suttanta, or on the Suttanta or Vinaya after getting permission [to ask] about the Abhidhamma, or on the Suttanta or Abhidhamma after getting permission [to ask] about the Vinaya.' But you do not know even that much....

[In the '*Mahā-Gosinga Sutta*' ('Great Gosinga Sutta')<sup>153</sup>, when the Venerable Sāriputta asked the Venerable MahāMoggallāna what kind of bhikkhu could illuminate the Gosinga Sāla-tree Forest, the Venerable MahāMoggallāna answered:]

Here, friend Sāriputta, two bhikkhus engage in a discussion on the Abhidhamma,<sup>154</sup> and they question each other, and each being questioned by the other answers without failure, and their discussion

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Rangoon): 1976. This passage from p.36-37 of that edition.

<sup>153</sup> M.I.iv.2

<sup>154</sup> Needless to say, sceptical voices, with reference to sapient linguists et.al. will argue that the word *Abhidhamma* does not here refer to the *Abhidhamma*: likewise with other such instances. For reference to such authorities, please see also above, p.106.

proceeds in accordance with the Dhamma. That kind of bhikkhu, friend Sāriputta, could illuminate this Gosinga Sāla-tree Forest.

[When the Venerable Sāriputta reported this to The Buddha praised the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna:]

*Sādhu, sādhu*, Sāriputta! Moggallāna, speaking rightly, should speak just as he did, for Moggallāna is a Dhamma-teacher (*Dhamma-kathiko*).

And tradition has it that those bhikkhus only who know Abhidhamma are true teachers of the Dhamma: the rest, though they speak on the Dhamma, are not teachers thereof. And why? They, in speaking on the Dhamma, confuse the different kinds of kamma and its results, the distinction between mind and matter, and the different kinds of state (*dhamma*).



[The author was on a number of occasions presented with the proposition that the ancient authoritative commentary to The Buddha's Teaching, the *Visuddhi-Magga* (*Purification Path*) was written by a Venerable Buddhaghosa, and that it is in many ways discordant with the Teachings of The Buddha.<sup>1</sup> One contention was that the *Visuddhi-Magga's* explanation of dependent origination as spanning a past, present and future life<sup>2</sup> is a spurious and external interpretation introduced by the author (the Venerable Buddhaghosa), and that such a 'three-lives' interpretation cannot be reconciled with the True Dhamma. One explanation was that he introduced this misinterpretation because, being of Brahmin origin, he believed in the existence of a soul.

If we are possessed of faith in The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, and are possessed of rudimentary knowledge about the Dhamma, we will find no reason to doubt the veracity of the teachings in the *Visuddhi-Magga*. Having practised according to the instructions in the *Visuddhi-Magga*, we will furthermore enjoy the good of the teachings, which is Samatha, Vipassanā, with insight into the characteristics of the eleven categories of ultimate mind and ultimate matter. If we are not obstructed by ignorance, doubt, past kamma, etc., we may in due course attain a path and fruition.

If we are possessed of blind doubt in the *Visuddhi-Magga*, of blind doubt in large amounts of the Pali Texts (blind doubt in the integrity of and learning of the Sangha elders), we will never cease to find things to doubt, in which case the good of the teachings will remain out of reach.<sup>3</sup> Although it is ultimately neither here nor there (of no interest to the faithful), it may therefore be useful to explain here the origin of the Pali Commentaries, and the role the Venerable Buddhaghosa played in them, in accordance with the historical view, for what it is worth. Many of the details given here are evident in the *Visuddhi-Magga* itself, and will be known to anyone who has actually read the work.]<sup>4</sup>

The ancient Sri Lankan chronicles (*Mahā-Vamsa* and *Cula-Vamsa*) explain that The Buddha's Teachings were introduced to Sri Lanka by the arahant Mahinda (son of King Asoka) around (what would now be reckoned) 300 B.C. As was custom also in The Buddha's day (623-543 B.C.), the arahant Mahinda had memorized the entire *Tiṭṭaka* and its commentaries, as they had been brought down from the first, second, and third councils. In Sri Lanka, the Canon was taught in the Pali, whereas the commentaries were translated into the local language, Sinhalese.

Approximately two hundred years later, in Sri Lanka, the *Tiṭṭaka* and Commentaries were for the first time put into writing, on palm-leaves. The decision to do so was prompted by the development of Sanskrit 'Buddhism' in India, with which heterodox ideas were introduced as Dhamma: it was around 100

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<sup>1</sup> The *Visuddhi-Magga* (*Purification Path*) is explained briefly above, p.297.

<sup>2</sup> Please see above, Table 3, p.98, and Table 5, p.114.

<sup>3</sup> Please see discussion above, p.304.

<sup>4</sup> Details taken from the introduction to *The Path of Purification*, an English translation of the *Visuddhi-Magga* by a Venerable Nāṇamoli.



B.C., some five hundred years after The Buddha's Parinibbāna. Within the next hundred years, Sanskrit 'Buddhism' was flourishing.

After another approximately four hundred years (400 A.C.), the Venerable Buddhaghosa arrived in Sri Lanka from India. The purpose of his arrival was expressly to obtain the commentaries of the 'Ancients' (*Porānā*), 'Past Teachers' (*Pubb-Ācariyā*), which the arahant Mahinda had brought. These 'Ancients' comprise the bulk of the Commentaries as we know them today, although there are also some later commentaries (the latest 100 A.C.), composed in Sri Lanka by bhikkhus of the orthodox Great Monastery (*Mahā-Vihāra*), the monastery founded by the arahant Mahinda.

The Venerable Buddhaghosa was given access to all the then extant Commentaries, which were all in Sinhalese. He ordered and edited the Texts, and compiled the Commentaries as we now know them. Further to that, he translated all the texts back into Pali. This explains the many 'new' terms, since it was by now approximately 900 years after The Buddha's Parinibbāna: just as any other language develops, so had the Pali language developed.

Before becoming a bhikkhu, the Venerable Buddhaghosa had received full training in the Brahmanic tradition.<sup>5</sup> This one may understand when one sees the *relentless accuracy, consistency and fluency of erudition*<sup>6</sup> with which he executed his compilations, and the *unerring consistency* of the explanations that he set down from the commentaries he studied.

Another feature of the Venerable Buddhaghosa's work is his personal modesty, and his overriding deference towards the authority of the ancient texts. He says, for example:<sup>7</sup>

**Now in this teaching, this dependent origination the Exalted One has set forth the text in the way beginning 'With ignorance as condition, there are formations'. Its meaning should be commented on by one**

- **who keeps within the circle of the Vibhajjavādins,<sup>8</sup>**
- **who does not misrepresent the teachers,**
- **who does not advertise his own standpoint,**
- **who does not quarrel with the standpoint of others,**
- **who does not distort the suttas,**
- **who is in agreement with the Vinaya,**

<sup>5</sup> Very many of the men who ordained as bhikkhus in The Buddha's time were of Brahmanic origin, and had received the full Brahmanic training: for example, the Venerable Sāriputta, - Mahā-Moggallāna, - Mahā-Kassapa, and Mahā-Kaccāna, the five hundred bhikkhus who attained arahantship upon listening to the 'Burning Sutta' (S.IV.I.i.iii.6), and the five bhikkhus who attained arahantship upon listening to the 'Non-self Characteristic Sutta' (S.III.I.II.i.7). That it should be so is not surprising, since there was no alternative such tradition: the Dhamma does not as a teaching exist prior to a Buddha's enlightenment. Please refer also to the many suttas where this is evident: learned Brahmins (and often their disciples) go to see The Buddha, gain faith, ordain as bhikkhus, practise, and soon attain arahantship.

<sup>6</sup> Description by the Venerable Ñāṇamoli in *The Path of Purification* p.xx.

<sup>7</sup> Vis.xvii 'Paññā-Bhūmi-Niddesa' ('Wisdom-Soil Description') PoP.25.

<sup>8</sup> VIBHAJJAVĀDINS: 'The term "Analyser" (*vibhajja-vādin*) appears at A.v.190, and at M.ii.197, in this sense, used to describe The Buddha and His followers, who do not rashly give unqualified answers to questions that need analysing before being answered.' (footnote by the Venerable Ñāṇamoli, *Path of Purification*, p.599).

- who looks to the Great References (*Mahā-Padesa*),<sup>9</sup>
- who illustrates the Law (*Dhamma*),
- who takes up the meaning (*attha*),

repeatedly reverting to the same meaning, describing it in various ways.

It is very, very rare that the Venerable Buddhaghosa gives his own opinion, and when he does, he makes it clear that he does.<sup>10</sup> In the *Visuddhi-Magga*, he gives his own opinion only once. It is in connection with the recollection of past lives. First he explains it according to the ancient Commentaries, then he explains it according to the *Abhidhamma*, and adds:<sup>11</sup>

**Our preference here is this.**

(*Ayamettha amhākaṃ khanti.*)

He does not give his own explanation: he gives only his preference.

And in the commentary that he compiled for the *Dīgha-Nikāya*, the Venerable Buddhaghosa says:<sup>12</sup>

**One's own opinion is the weakest authority of all, and should be accepted only if it accords with the suttas.**

This itself accords with the **Great References** (*Mahā-Padesa*) set forth by The Buddha in the '*Mahā Parinibbāna-Suttaṃ*', referred to by the Venerable Buddhaghosa himself, in the quotation just preceding.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Quoted and discussed above Appendix IV 'Is This the Dhamma-Vinaya?', p.281.

<sup>10</sup> The Venerable Ñāṇamoli, in his translation, *The Path of Purification*, says: 'The rarity of such instances [when the Venerable Buddhaghosa advances his own opinion] and the caution expressed in them imply that he himself was disinclined to speculate, and felt the need to point the fact out when he did.'

<sup>11</sup> Vis.xiii '*Abhiññā-Niddesa*' ('Direct Knowledge Description') PoP.123

<sup>12</sup> Quoted *Path of Purification* p.xxxi, with source reference DA.567-8.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted and discussed above, Appendix IV 'Is This the Dhamma-Vinaya?', p.281.



## Glossary

Each entry is also a footnote in the main text. Words underlined are either explained elsewhere in the glossary or in the main text.

***ānāpāna*** in- and out-breath, a meditation subject.

**Ānanda, Venerable** The Buddha's personal attendant for the last twenty-five years of His life, who attained arahantship after The Buddha's Parinibbāna  
***añjali*** respectful salutation; palms joined and raised to chest, face, forehead or crown

**Arahant** one who has put an end to all defilements, which is an end of suffering  
***ariya*** someone who has attained one of the four paths and fruitions, e.g. a stream-enterer or non-returner

**ascetic, fire-worshipping** an ascetic with matted hair, who worships fire  
**ascetic** (*samaṇa*) *samaṇas* in ancient India were not always ascetics in the sense commonly understood in English. As a whole, they were 'holy men' distinguished from the established priests (Brahmins), living aloof from society and sensuality, being alms-men, engaged in a religious life, which for only some involved 'asceticism' such as self-mortification, etc. (dismissed by The Buddha as useless.).

**bhikkhu** Buddhist monk who has been ordained according to the *Vinaya* laid down in the Pali Texts

**bhikkuni** Buddhist nun who has been ordained according to the *Vinaya* laid down by The Buddha in the Pali Texts

**Bodhi Tree** species of tree under which Goṭama Buddha became enlightened; it is venerated as such in the Buddhist world

**Bodhisatta** (enlightenment being): in the Pali Texts, this refers to Gotama Buddha in his past before becoming a Buddha. Thus, The Buddha speaks of Himself as earlier having been 'only an enlightened bodhisatta (*an-abhisambuddho bodhisatt-ova*)'.

**Brahmā** ruler of higher realms; in Brahmanism, he is believed to be Omnipotent Creator, etc.

**Brahmā, abide as** anyone who is born in the Brahmā realm is, like Brahmā himself, devoid of hatred and anger, and possessed of only kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuna*), appreciative joy (*mudita*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*). Anyone who is possessed of these four states is therefore said to 'abide as Brahmā'.

**Buddha Sāsana** customarily translated as 'The Buddha's Dispensation', can also mean 'The Buddha's Teaching'

***dāna*** (lit. giving) offering food, robes, dwelling, medicine, etc. to monks or others whom one has faith in; people sometimes invite(d) bhikkhus to come to their house or to a for that purpose erected building to be given food. The bhikkhus (would) eat, and then give a suitable talk, before leaving.

**dependent origination** natural law by which all mental or physical phenomena originate dependent on other mental or physical phenomena: the understanding of non-independent origination is at the core of The Buddha's Teaching

**deva** inhabitant of realms just above the human realms; they are realms of refined and seemingly endless sensual pleasure, but, as The Buddha points out, although the life-span there is very long, it is limited; to this day people will aspire to be reborn there.

**divine eye** (*dibba cakkhu*) one of the five mundane supernormal powers that can be developed through concentration. A Fully Enlightened Buddha's such powers are exceptionally superior.

**Dhamma** (Sanskrit *Dharma*) the Truth, the Teachings of the Buddha  
**garuka kamma** weighty kamma: murder of mother, father, an arahant, with evil intention shedding the blood of a Buddha, or causing a schism in the Sangha  
**ghosts, hungry** beings invisible to the naked eye, the origin of whose state is greed, and who are perpetually hungry and thirsty

**Gotama** The Buddha's clan name

**jhāna** eight stages of deep concentration, developed as a tool for developing insight to attain Nibbāna

**kamma** (*Sanskrit*: karma; lit. *action*): the natural law that manifests as intentional actions coming back to the doer in due circumstances: do good and in due circumstances, a related good will come to you; do evil and in due circumstances, a related evil will come to you: in this life or in a future life.

**kamma-vipāka** kamma result, rebound: this is the intentional good or bad action we have done coming back to us, according to a mechanism of Nature

**King Yāma**: king of hells

**kusala** wholesome, good, skilful, useful: to do kusala kamma is a prerequisite for good to come to us; once one is reborn as an animal, it is usually very difficult to get back to the human or a higher realm, because animals make a lot of akusala kamma, and little if any kusala kamma.

**kuṭi** a bhikkhu's single dwelling, his lodge, cell

**Mahākassapa, Venerable** one of The Buddha's great disciples

**Mahāmoggallana, Venerable** one of The Buddha's two chief disciples

**Māra** ruler of the highest deva realm, Lord of death, the Evil One; the term is sometimes used figuratively

**mettā** meditation to develop a mind of kindness towards all beings

**Noble Sangha** the order of bhikkhus, in The Buddha's time included many bhikkhus who had higher supramundane attainments

**Noble Truths, Four** 1) The Truth of Suffering; 2) of the Cause; 3) of the Cessation; 4) of the Way to the Cessation

**once-return** (return to the human realm; the sensual sphere) the second supramundane attainment one can acquire; with this, one will return at the most once again to the human realm and is assured final attainment of Nibbāna within two lives.

**Pali** ancient Indian language, spoken by The Buddha; the texts of the Theravāda tradition are in Pali.

**pāramī** accumulation of kusala kamma throughout past lives that leads to enlightenment; when they are sufficiently developed, and the conditions are right, there is enlightenment.

**Parinibbāna** full Nibbāna: often used to refer to an arahant's final attainment of Nibbāna, his/her death, after which he/she is no longer reborn

**Pātimokkha**: main rule for bhikkhus that comprises 227 rules. There are also many more rules that are found in the *Mahāvagga* and *Cūlavagga*.

**Precepts, Five** the basic code of conduct for Buddhists: 1) Not to take life; 2) Not to steal; 3) Not to engage in venereal misconduct; 4) Not to lie; 5) Not to take intoxicants

*pindapāta* the bhikkhu's almsround

**requisites, four** clothes, food, shelter and medicine are requisite for human life  
**Sakyan, son of the** appellation given to bhikkhus, as The Buddha was of the Sakyan people

**Samatha** the development of concentration

*saṃsāra* the endless running on and rushing about from life to life on this, that and the other plane of existence; the round of rebirth, ongoing rebirth, which has no beginning; hence, in his/her wandering in the round of rebirth, every being has met every being before; rebirth is not the same as reincarnation, as the latter requires the existence of a soul; since no such thing exists, The Buddha speaks of rebirth.

**Sangha** order of bhikkhus.

**Sāriputta, Venerable** By The Buddha pronounced his foremost chief disciple *Sāsana* (also *Buddha Sāsana*) customarily translated as 'The Buddha's Dispensation'; can also mean 'The Buddha's Teaching'.

**Siddhattha, Prince** prior to His enlightenment, Gotama Buddha was the Sakyan prince, Siddhattha

**stream entry** 'entry' into the stream of 'Dhamma' the first supramundane attainment one can acquire; with this, one is assured final attainment of Nibbāna within seven lives

**tathāgata** (lit. 'thus gone') translated usually as 'the Perfect One'; an epithet used by The Buddha to refer to Himself.

**Theravāda** (Elders (*Thera*) Teaching (*vāda*)) tradition prevailing in Cambodia, Chittagong, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand

**Tipiṭaka** (Three Baskets) the Canon of the Theravāda tradition: *Vinaya Piṭaka*, *Sutta Piṭaka*, and *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*

**Triple Gem** The Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha

**Tusita** one of the six deva realms

**Vinaya** monastic rule for bhikkhus

**Vipassanā** the development of insight